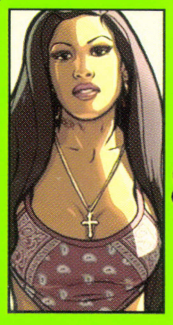
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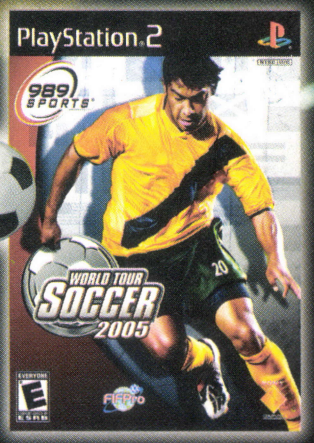


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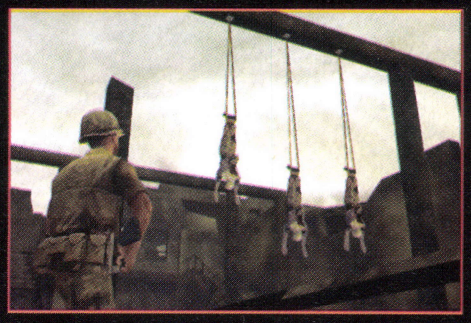


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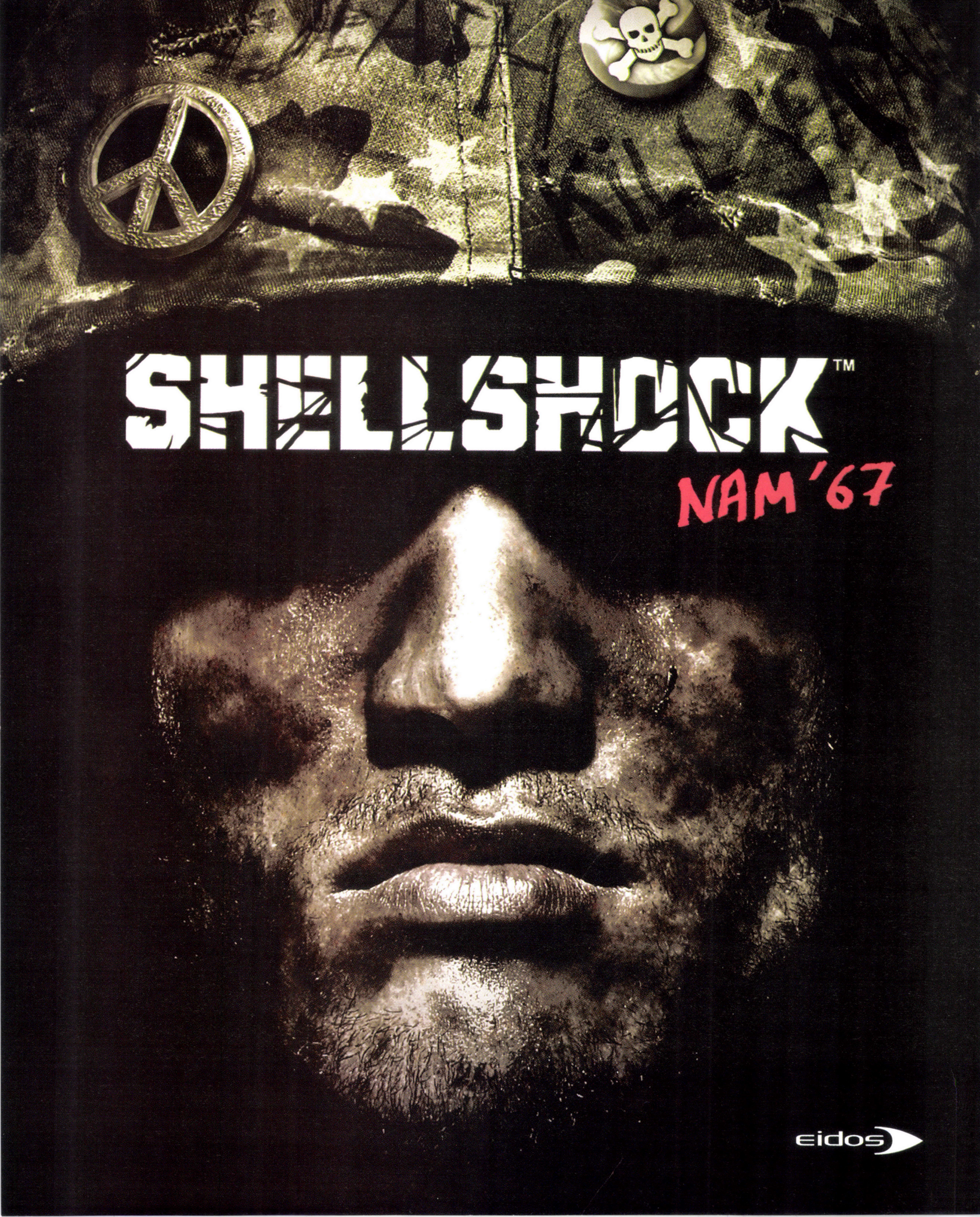
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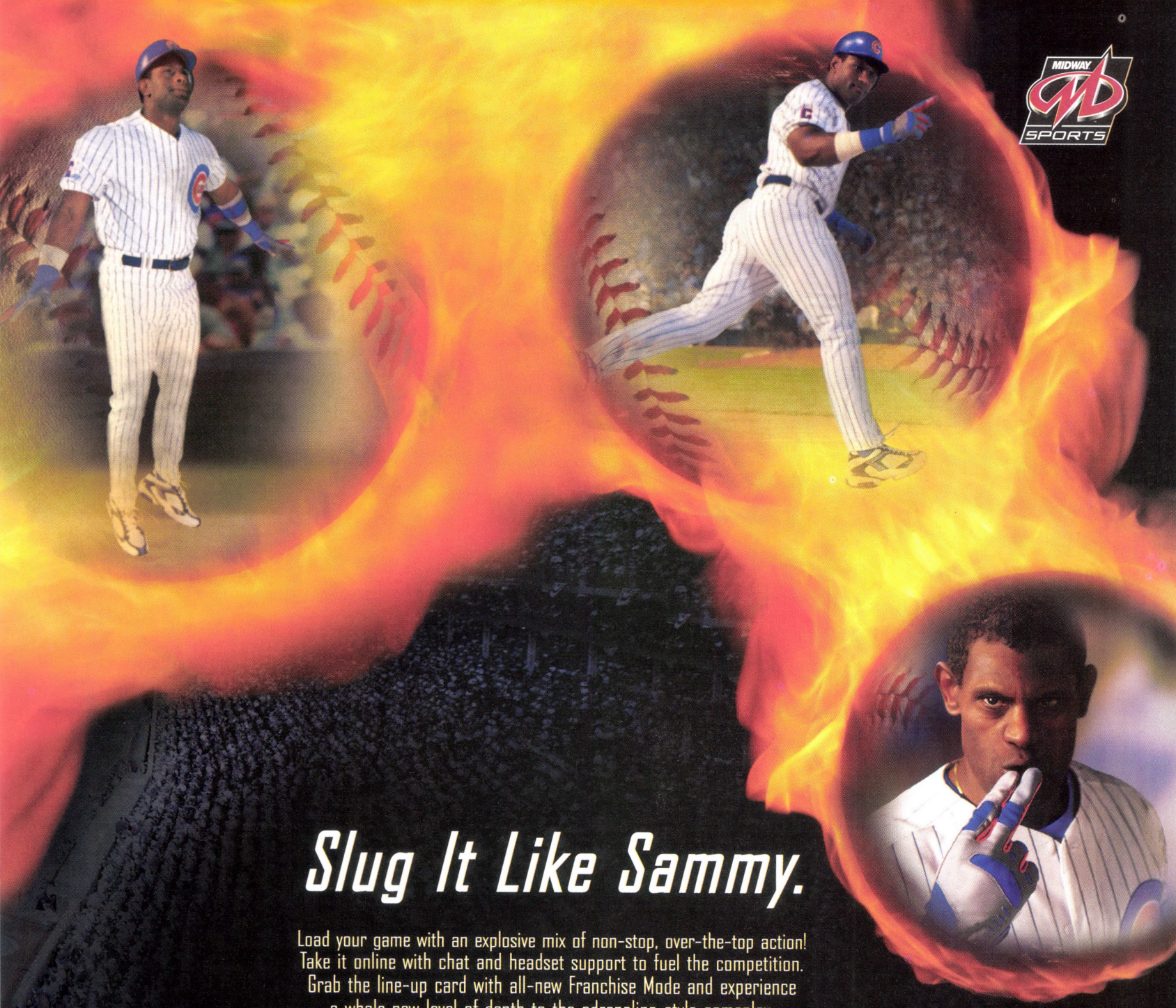
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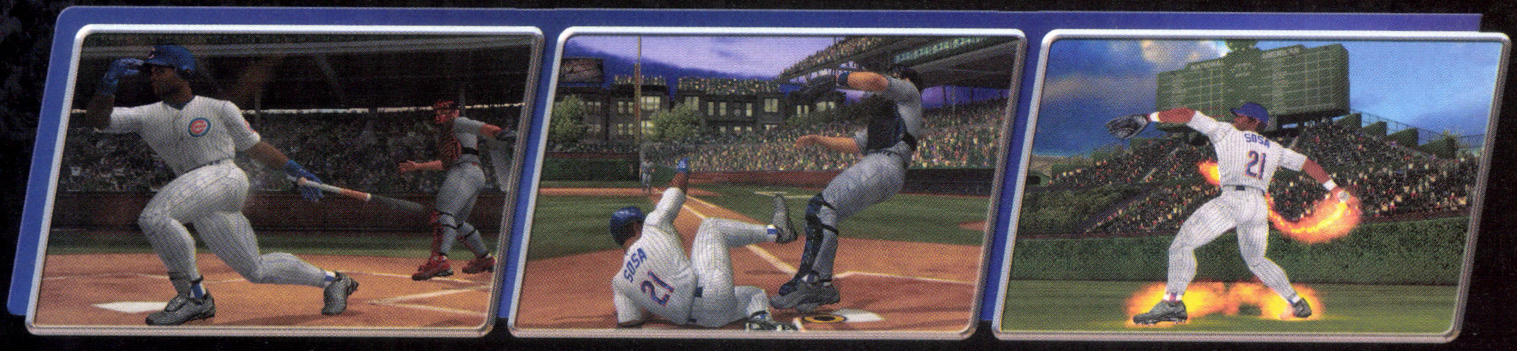

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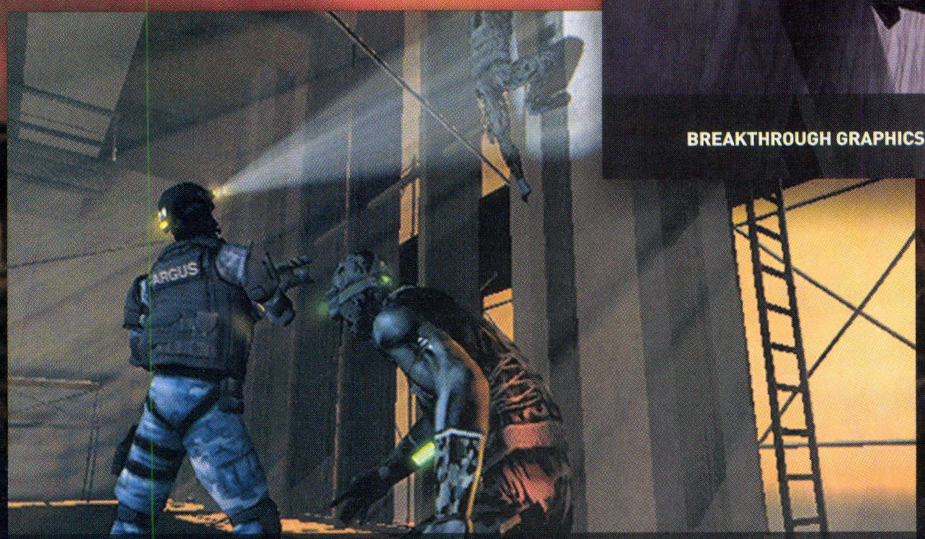
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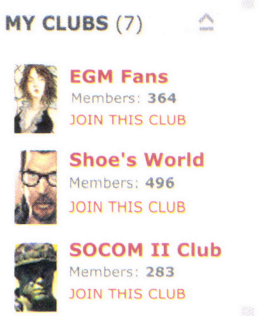


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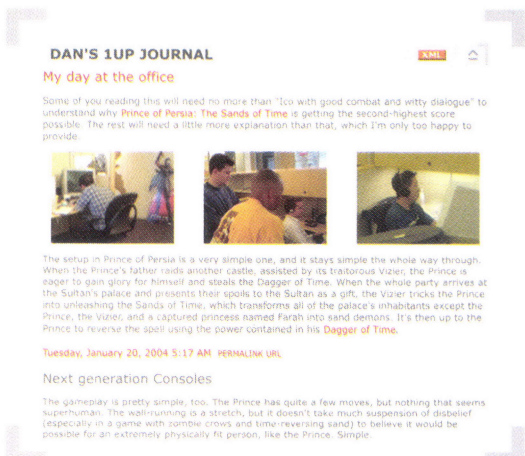
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COOL STUFF FROM E3

SQUEEZED IN AT THE LAST MINUTE, FOR YOUR PLEASURE



Fate conspired this month to put us in a situation where the magazine went to print just as E3, the biggest event of the year, was starting. Fortunately, we were able to dispatch a crack team of ninjas to L.A. and produce a report (on page 24) that was quite literally beamed from the show floor, directly to the printer, using ninja space magic from the future (OK, it was a PowerBook). We'll have a more thorough look at everything from E3 next month, but we squeezed in as much of the important stuff as we could this month. For more information in the meantime, go to www.1UP.com.

JOHN DAVISON

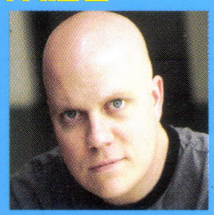
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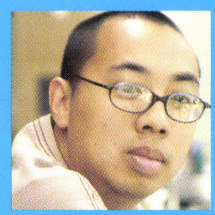
DANA JONGEWAARD has been reconnecting with her hobbies in the past month. She started sewing again for the first time in years and is deciding what to tackle for her next knitting project. To counterbalance all that girliness, she's also been shooting the crap out of all the aliens she can find in *Half-Life*.



JOE RYBICKI spends his time away from *OPM* playing *SOCOM*, playing poker, and playing music. He's "joePM" in *SOCOM II* (and in just about every other online game, including every poker room he's found so far), and you can hear his well-meaning musical stylings at www.johnnyhighground.com.



CHRIS BAKER just wants to start playing games with names that make sense again. *Bujingai*? That translates to "military action blade town." Right. And *Front Mission*? A mission in front of what? Oh well. At least their gameplay makes up for their silly titles.



THIERRY NGUYEN spent years reading all sorts of old and crazy books for his studies at the finest public school in the country, UC Berkeley. What did he finally use his knowledge and (allegedly) hard-earned Bachelor of Arts in English for? A review of *Van Helsing*. See, kids? Education matters.



GIANCARLO VARANINI recently realized that attending the annual E3 extravaganza is like eating a humongous stack of pancakes. You're excited and energetic at first, but when you're all done, someone has to cart you home in a wheelbarrow...err yeah.



BOB CONLON loves his TiVo like one of his children, but it has controlled his life for the past six months. Hopefully, the summer rerun season will let him get back to his steady diet of playing *MVP Baseball 2005* and making his beagle run on the treadmill to lose his puppy fat.



RYAN VULK is a frontline bruiser in *SOCOM*, with the Thundercats to back him up. He also likes to taunt people over the mic with pickles and mayonnaise. Don't be surprised to see you've been killed by Gurlock the next time you cross his path.



TINA HUYNH was so freaked out by the pushy camera crews and sweating crowds at last year's E3 that she swore she'd avoid this year's show—and decided to flee to Hawaii instead. Although she wouldn't have minded going back to meet Lisa Gleave at the Tecmo booth.

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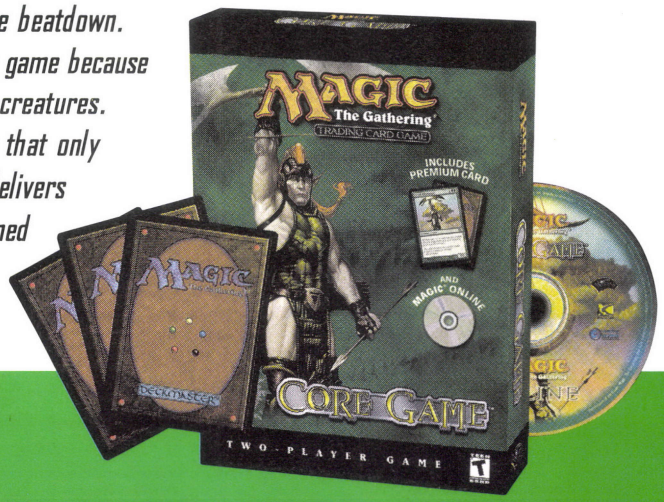
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ON THE DVD

TRY BEFORE YOU BUY



If you're anywhere near the average age of the *OPM* editors, you're gonna love this month's disc: Fully playable versions of both *Paperboy* and *Smash TV*, two of the most addictive games of the arcade era. What other magazine hand-delivers the heady days of youth?

[PLAY IT!]



TRACK GT4

This month's *Gran Turismo 4* update is a bit less specific than last month's, but it features lots more game footage, plus more conversations with *GT4* creator Kazunori Yamauchi.



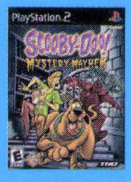
MVP BASEBALL 2004

Red Sox at Yankees—relive the dream. *MVP* was the game to beat this year, and no one did. This three-inning demo gives you a really good look at why.



MLB SLUGFEST: LOADED

Come for the over-the-top arcade baseball, stay for the hysterical color commentary. Make sure you do your best to punch every player who walks by.



SCOOBY-DOO! MYSTERY MAYHEM

You may think three levels from a game based on a classic cartoon might be child's play—but this time, the monsters aren't just local townspeople in masks.



RIBBIT KING

Umm...it would be great if we could describe what *Ribbit King* and its majestic game of Frolf were about. But we can't. No one can. You will just have to play it yourself, in all its amphibian glory.



PAPERBOY

Remember those lovely days when you got up at the crack of dawn and dodged from sprinklers and angry dogs while doing your paper route? Relive them in this 2D classic from Midway.



SMASH TV

Another classic arcade game from Midway. Fight off hordes of green-clad men in front of a studio audience. Kind of like a 2D *Running Man*, minus the presence of a bodybuilder.

[WATCH IT!]



BUT WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

Tips on how to get free money in *Champions of Norrath*, exclusive coverage of Jet Li at the *Rise to Honor* launch event, and more! All available only on your *OPM* demo disc.



METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER

There's double the *MGS* goodness on the disc this month—check out an interview with franchise creator Hideo Kojima and watch a preview for *Snake Eater*.



SLY 2: BAND OF THIEVES

Go behind the scenes with Sucker Punch and hear their ambitious plans for the new game, then check out the preview to see the Band of Thieves in action.



SSX 3

Having problems with those pesky Superpipes? Fret no more—with these tips, you'll be able to get the high scores every time. It's great snowboarding without any broken bones.



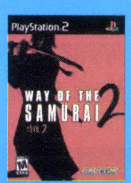
HARRY POTTER AND THE SORCERER'S STONE

Want to have maximum life? Just watch this segment and learn how you can get all of the wizard cards on the very first day.



BUJINGAI: THE FORSAKEN CITY

Watch samurais battle against bosses in cool gameplay footage from this dueling actionfest—it's a true tribute to classic Hong Kong cinema.



WAY OF THE SAMURAI 2

You say you haven't had enough dueling samurai fun? You're in luck—this trailer provides more sword-filled goodness to sate your appetite.

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Marketing Team
Kim Yuen, Steve Williams, Jesse Caid
Executive Producers
Andrew House, Marilyn Weyant
Format Q&A
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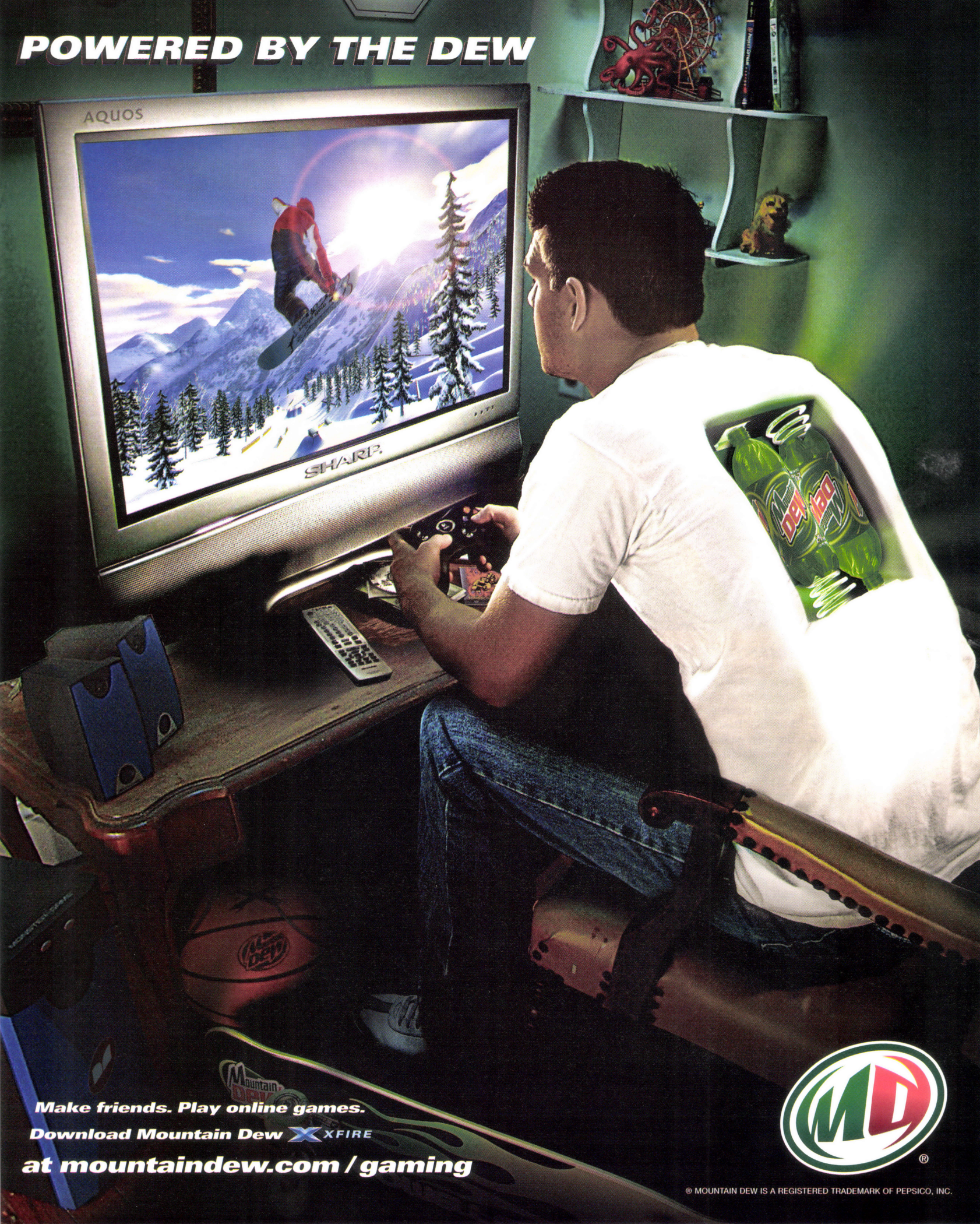
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INPUT



LETTER OF THE MONTH

I read an article about *Astro Boy*. From what I read, it sounds like a game that my wife and I would both enjoy. The description of the scope of the game and size of the city were both very impressive. And the screenshots...beautiful.

I'm sorry to say that I will probably never play this game.

Fact is, the character himself is the problem. He is a little boy. I know he is supposed to be a robot...in leather underpants and red hooker boots.

I even felt a little weird looking at the screenshots. I wondered if it was just me, so I started showing the article to other people, and everyone I showed it to—male and female alike—all had the same basic feeling. General consensus is, we don't know if we could enjoy getting into a game that stars a little boy in leather hot pants.

I know the character has existed for many years in Japan, but I fear his first videogame outing here could be a flop unless Sonic Team simply puts some clothes on the kid.

David de Ricci
via e-mail

Hey, lay off! If Astro Boy wants to dress like a hooker, let him dress like a hooker. After all, you don't see robots like C-3PO even bothering to wear clothes. And he's even fruitier.

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PHANTASY HOPES ECLIPSED

As I looked through Issue 81 (the new style looks awesome, by the way) for maybe a known list of games coming to the PSP, I found a green skeleton on page 50 with the headline "Death to the PSP." I looked over at the other games Digital Eclipse had produced when I almost had a heart attack. *PHANTASY STAR*!!!!!!!!!!!!!! If they make that game for the PSP, I would be the happiest person alive. It's one of the best futuristic RPGs I've ever played and would be a great addition to the PSP.

Chris S.
via e-mail

Phantasy Star is pretty great, Chris—but don't get too excited about Digital Eclipse's involvement with it. All it did was take the first three games in the series, which Sega developed more than a decade ago for Master System and Genesis, and adapt them to Game Boy Advance compatibility. If you want *Phantasy Star* on PSP, aim your hopes (and letters!) toward the House of Sonic.

RACISM IN SPIRA?

As soon as *Final Fantasy X-2* came out, I bought it. In the game wreaking havoc on the in-game baddies, I noticed something. The main villain's name is the "Leblanc Syndicate." I looked it up, because I was vaguely aware of it being French. Leblanc would be "the white," and Syndicate comes from the Greek word *sundikos*, meaning "advocate." So that's "the White Advocate" right there.

I know this is going out on a limb here, but does it sound to anyone else like the KKK is back in action? How horrible would that be?! And even worse, what if this beautiful game is somehow rotten on the inside and brainwashing the masses for racism?! Life as we know it would cease to exist! Chaos and destruction would reign supreme!

OK, so I'm a little paranoid. Better safe than sorry, eh? In any case, I thought it was a bit interesting and that you fine folks would be minorly interested in my miniscule discovery.

The Professor
via e-mail

We commend your research, Prof, but your conclusion does seem a little far-fetched. Even if there is an ounce of truth to it, keep in mind that the Leblanc Syndicate is *evil*, just like the KKK, the Nazis, or any group of "white advocates" out there—and you're fighting *against* them. We can pretty much assure you that the Japanese folks who created *FFX-2* have no interest in spreading such propaganda.

HUH?

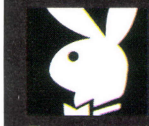
Our ruling band, DFW, loves to get geezed up before a night of sharking by playing *Winning Eleven 7*. So one night we got stiged up and recorded a song about the game. It's called "Euro 2004 Unofficial Video Game Anthem (WE . . . 7!)." I figured *OPM* would like to give it a listen and let your boshgrippling readership listen in, too. We've put the MP3 up on our site at www.doublefullwindsor.com. Full it up large, you jackasses!

Fillet, Dental, Mother, Headlight, and Tarmac
Vancouver, Canada

GAMERS ARE TALKING ABOUT

STRAIGHT FROM THE OPM MESSAGE BOARD

Our monthly roundup of hot topics, gathered from the *OPM* message board at playstationmagazine.com.



BEING HEF

You're either highly interested in or disgusted by *Playboy: The Mansion*. "What exactly is it you do?" asks **xtremeskater3**. "Oh, Playmates? That's what you 'do'? Hell yeah, this is for me!"

"At the risk of sounding unpopular, I'm totally against this," offers **Carnal_Zen**.

"There's something about playing as an old man who needs liquid Viagra injected into his bloodstream every five minutes to stay alive that turns me off," **Ocelot1138** submits. "That isn't to say I won't play the game, though."



UNPROVEN HYPE

Oralb808 seems to be feeling a bit sarcastic: "Did you know that *ShellShock: Nam '67* is powered by 'Guerrilla's groundbreaking *Killzone* engine'?" he queries. "Sheesh. *Killzone* hasn't even come out yet, and already its engine is so groundbreaking that you can use it as a selling point for other games!"

"All the people that have seen the core engine in action for both *Killzone* and *ShellShock* seem pretty stoked about it," counters **AlienMenace**. "All the videos I have seen of both games look quite similar in areas, which is good enough reason to buy both, hype aside."

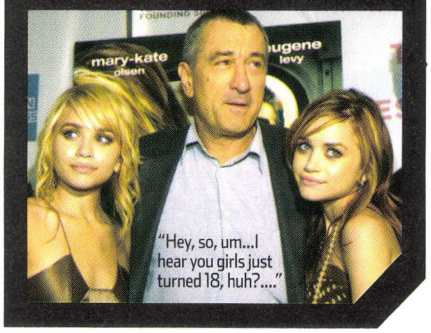
"If *ShellShock* is fun, I will buy it," simplifies **wookie39**. "If *Killzone* is fun, I will buy it."

ACCLAIM VS. AN EVIL EMPIRE

Jedi_dad starts a conversation reacting to Mary-Kate and Ashley Olsen suing Acclaim for not using their game license effectively. "I'm torn on who to root for," he says. "Acclaim ruined *Alias*, *Batman*, *Turok*, and have just maintained countless other titles with little to no innovation in them. Then again, the Olsen twins probably wipe their arses with Ben Franklins."

"Acclaim should have known that anything with the words 'Mary-Kate & Ashley' won't sell," comments **DevGEM**. (Which, to be fair, a solid argument could be made against.) "The games, the TV shows, the movies, all of it...crap." We won't argue there.

"Do [the Olsens] really need $300,000 when they already have over (use Dr. Evil voice here) one *biiillleeeeon* dollars?" ponders **TheSoulTakerX**. "And despite Acclaim sucking, I hope they win the case—'cause I hate the Olsen twins more."



"Hey, so, um...I hear you girls just turned 18, huh?...."



We're not sure, but we think that translates to "We made a song about *Winning Eleven 7*. Please listen." Funny...that Fillet guy bears a striking resemblance to a former *OPM* editor.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

I was reading your April mag when I came to page 32 (the March calendar). As I was going down, I came across day 28. It said, "Send us a photo of how you celebrated Something on a Stick Day." I said to myself, "Vito, you have to win." But how? Later that day, a pic fell out of an old 1970s mag. This was fate. This was my time to win. So here is the sick pic of how I celebrated the 28th of March.
Vito I.
Address Withheld

Contest? That was a contest? Well, Vito, seeing as how you're the only one who entered...you win!



GREETINGS FROM IRAQ

There is nothing to do in Iraq. I was wondering if you had any *Final Fantasy* art so I can practice my drawing. We have no TVs or PlayStations, so I try to practice drawing every day. And on a sad note, the only mail I get is from my mom. If you could write me back, that would be awesome. If not, you could always send me a TV.
Pvt. Ryan D. Wicks
Somewhere in Iraq

Anything we can do to save you from boredom, Private Ryan (sorry...couldn't resist). We can only imagine what you're going through out there, and we admire your courage—the least we can do is fulfill your humble request. Don't "practice" too hard when you get to area with heart, now, OK?

STREET FIGHTER TRIVIA

Was just reading through an *OPM* at work and stopped on page 22 of issue 79. Under the "Ask Us Anything" section, I noticed a question on why the Japanese *Street Fighter* names of Vega, M. Bison, and Balrog were switched. I had always heard that "M. Bison" was really the boxer Balrog's name in Japan because it was supposed to be Mike Tyson (M.

GOING UNDERGROUND

SEE IT, PLAY IT, LOVE IT ON THE DEMO DISC

WATCH IT OVER AND OVER

[The *Onimusha 3* intro movie on last month's disc] is unbelievable!!! Your jaw will be on the floor collecting rug samples, so vacuum before you tune in. I only wish you could actually do those moves in the gameplay.
jedi_dad
via the message board

LOVIN' IT ALL

I may be biased, but with Optimus Prime and Jennifer Garner on your last disc, how can you go wrong? *Front Mission 4* was a pleasant surprise, too. Whoever the music composer for Squenix is should be doing movie music. *Onimusha*'s intro was simply mind-blowing.
knight_cloak
via the message board

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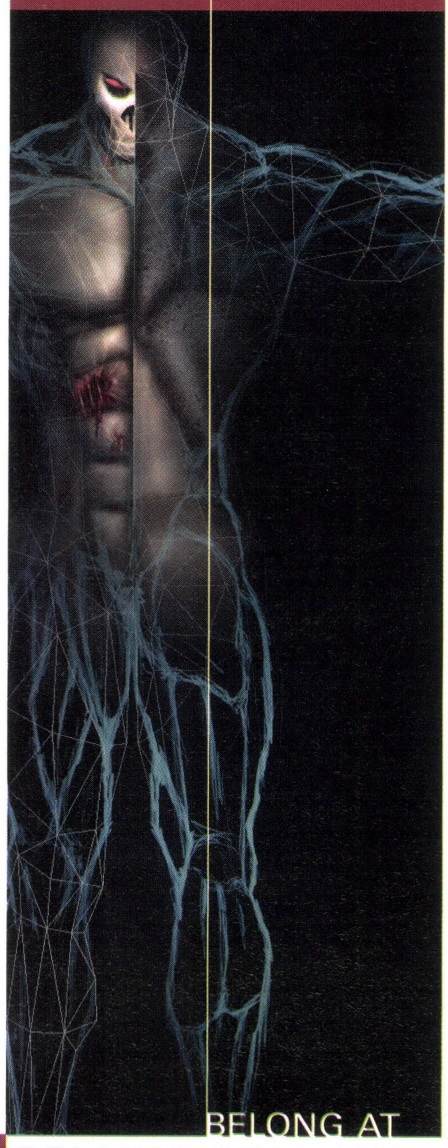
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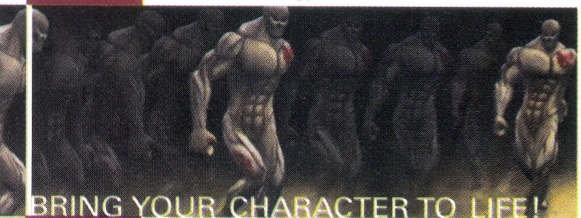
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Bison...get it?), but when the game ported to the U.S., they were scared people would recognize the fact, so they switched the boss names around.

Steve Ervin
via e-mail

That's right, Steve. In other words, M. Bison threatens to eat babies and bites off ears in Japan, but Balrog does that here.

GAMES ARE TOO EASY

Why is it that every game as of late has royally sucked in challenge? Every latest game that I have played has been way too easy to beat. Why are they rushing to get games on the market but never take the time to make them challenging for us, the gamers?

Chris Thompson
via e-mail

GAMES ARE TOO HARD

I have an issue with games lately. Why is it that bosses are so freaking hard to beat? It takes too much time and luck for me to see some games' endings before I quit and use a cheat. I'm so frustrated!

April Risch
Address Withheld

Chris and April kind of represent the collective Goldilocks of the gaming public. Only thing is, Chris seems to be drawn to Momma's games and April to Poppa's. Both of you, find Baby's games. They're out there, and they're *juuuuust* right.

GOOFS

The late hours involved in putting together last month's issue must have affected our brains. Allow us to correct the following errors:

- Digital Extremes is the developer of *Dark Sector*, the first announced PlayStation 3 game, not Digital Eclipse, as we noted on page 29.
- Somehow, the screenshot for *Mercenaries* on page 36 also found its way into the boxes for *Front Mission 4* and *Killzone*. We're still trying to figure that one out.
- The "tricked-out Honda Civic" on page 75 is actually a tricked-out Mazdaspeed Protégé. Apologies to Brendan Cohoe, who owns the car.

TATTOO OF THE MONTH

STRAIGHT OUTTA ST. PAUL

Here is a tattoo that I recently did for a guy named T.J. Cash. He loves PlayStation 2, and he especially loves Twisted Metal: Black. Hope you like it!
Greg "Grease" Lehman
tattoosfromgrease.com
St. Paul, MN



We do! In fact, this could be the best one we've ever received. Good work, Grease!

ASK US ANYTHING!

STUFF YOU'VE ALWAYS WONDERED...OR HAVEN'T

STUPID QUESTION OF THE MONTH

Could you people explain the Pros and Cons part of your rating system and how it affects the score?
Nathan C.
via e-mail

Dude...it's called a summary.

DO THEY HATE US?

Q. You must get fairly friendly with developers during the 18 months you are previewing their games in *OPM*. Does it affect your relations with the actual people involved when you eventually pan the final product in a review for the game?
Phil German
via e-mail

A. Not as much as you'd think. Actually, we may chat with developers themselves here and there, but we tend to get most of the information through the (go figure) public relations folks that handle the talent. Most developers usually don't mention dissatisfaction with our reviews to us, but we're aware that when we're particularly mean, we probably bruise some egos from time to time.

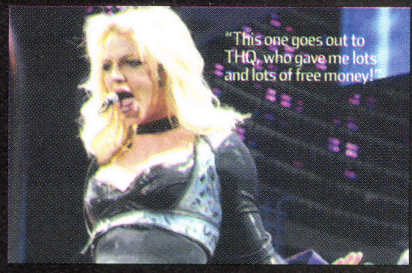
NOT SO FINAL, AFTER ALL

Q. How did Squaresoft come up with the name *Final Fantasy*?
Cole C.
via e-mail

A. Back in the mid-'80s, Square was in a pretty tough spot. The Japanese developer needed to release a big NES game to stay in business. All of its hopes rode on an epic RPG with a fantasy setting—it was the company's final hope. Many there thought it would also be the developer's "final fantasy." We'd say they were wrong.

THAT CAN'T BE CHEAP...

Q. How much does a license for videogame music cost per song?
Ice Langlois
via e-mail



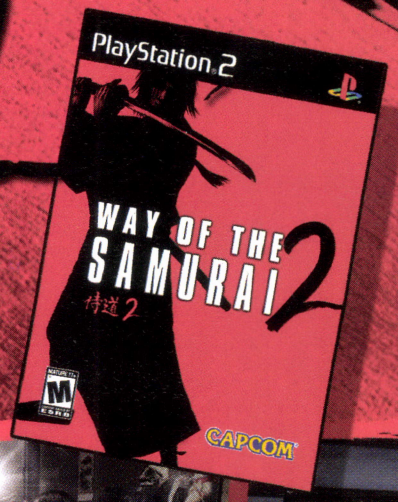
A. That's a tough one to answer—it really depends on the band, the record company, and other factors, and it's not the kind of thing publishers usually disclose. We've heard it's free sometimes—a band needs exposure, so it strikes a deal to get into a hot new game. We've also heard that music from bigger bands can cost upwards of $100,000. That's a lot of games to sell for four minutes of content! Now you know why there are only five songs on *Britney's Dance Beat*.

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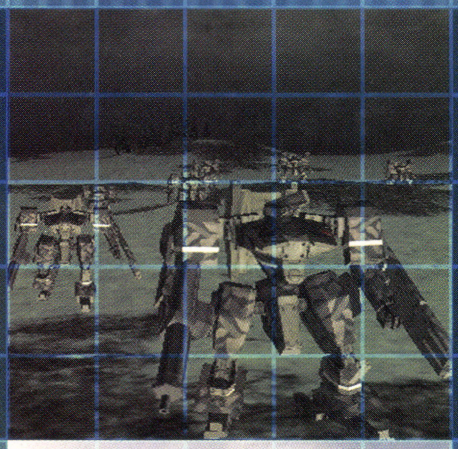
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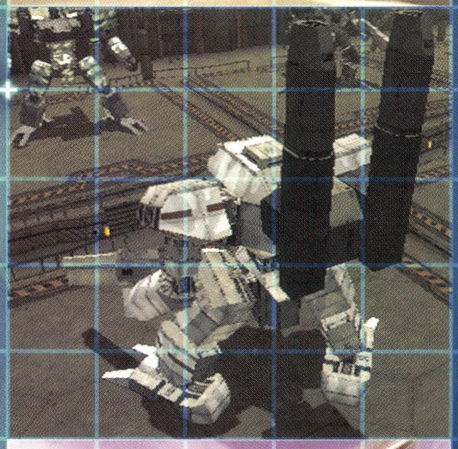
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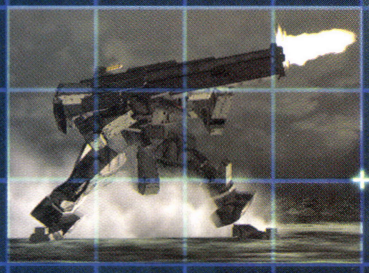


AIR STRIKE



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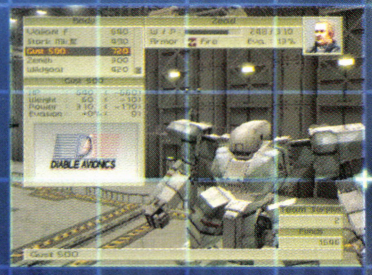
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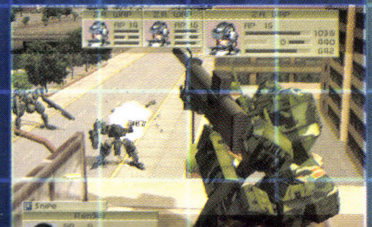
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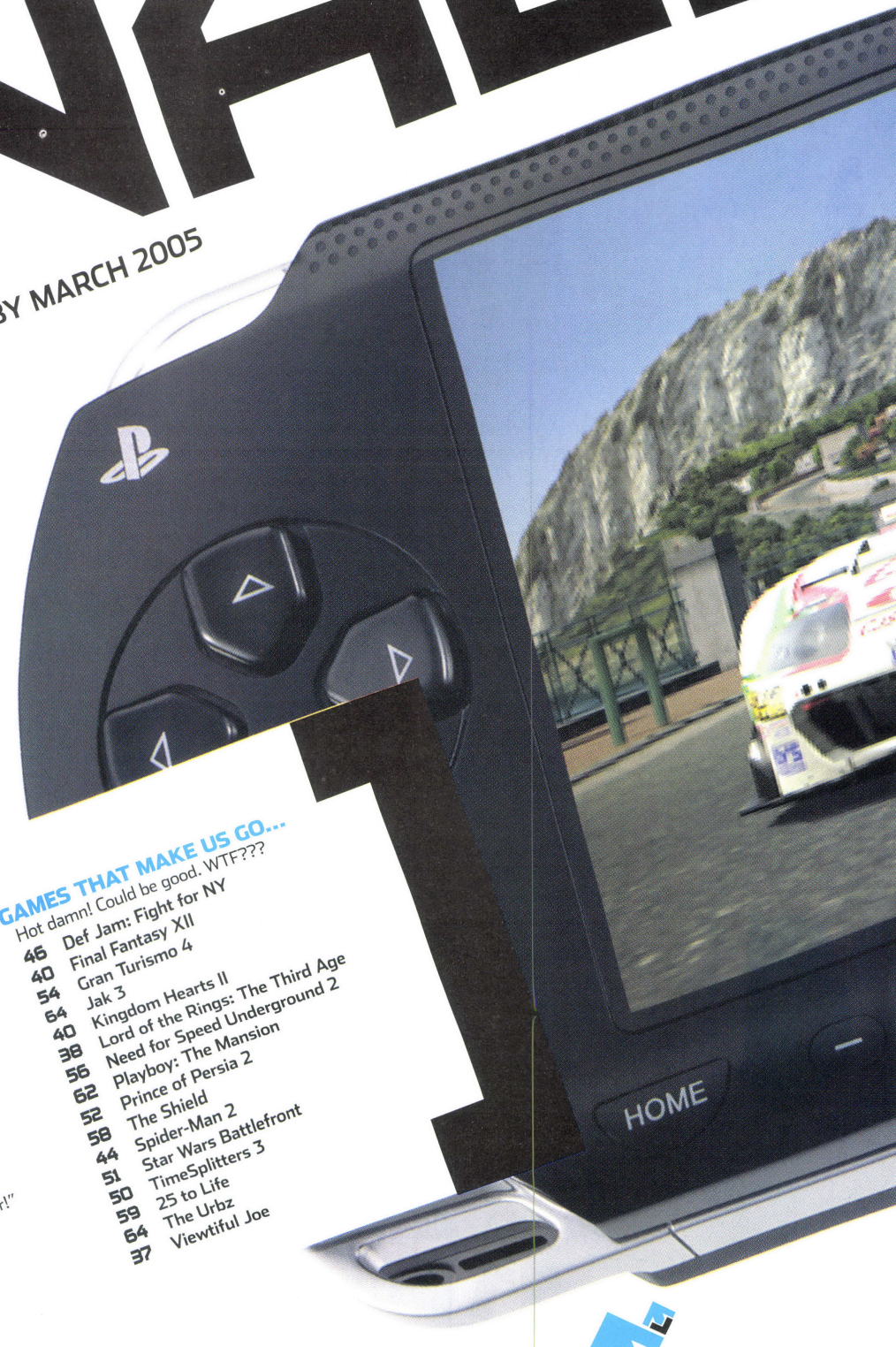
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After months of speculation as to whether the PSP really would look like the prototype shown last year, Sony finally unveiled the final design of the PSP at E3 on May 11. As you can see from the photos we have here, not a great deal has changed. The unit measures just under seven inches across, and weighs about nine ounces, which when you think about it, is no more strenuous on the wrists than eating a double cheeseburger from In-N-Out. Battery life is said to be competitive with devices providing similar functionality, with SCEA president and CEO Kaz Hirai quoting 10, eight, and two hours. Upon further investigation this would appear to refer to times for games, music, and movie play respectively.

As previously reported, the PSP is Wi-Fi'd out the wazoo, and also sports IR ports, USB 2.0, and a Memory Stick Pro Duo slot. Sony is keen to emphasize the connectivity of the device, citing PSP to PSP to PS2 to PC connections and numerous variations thereof. Although not confirmed as we go to press, there's also talk of the PSP being able to access Sony's recently launched Sony Connect service for music content and possibly even downloadable games—once they've figured out how to let it do that.

SPEC-TACULAR

SONY SHOWS THAT YOU CAN TAKE IT WITH YOU

The D-pad is nothing fancy. Originally thought to be some wacky hybrid analog thing, it turns out it's just a plain old vanilla pad.

The screen is a 4.3" TFT widescreen that boasts a full-on 16:9 aspect ratio and displays 16.7 million colors.

There are only two shoulder buttons, and on the early demo version we saw, they appear to be made of a funky transparent plastic. On the front of the unit are the familiar "sacred symbols" buttons, which are no longer flush with the face as they were on the prototype.

ACTUAL SIZE



2.9 INCHES TALL

6.7 INCHES WIDE

The Memory Stick Pro Duo is inserted here. You'll be able to store game saves as well as video and music content on these little slivers of fun.



There are no analog sticks on the PSP, but this textured nub would appear to be an analog input device not unlike the "nipple" controller on some laptops.

The headphone jack is here, in this little divot. Headphones will be available with "remote commanders" that come either with or without microphones.



ACCESSORIZE!
Also available for PSP will be a USB digital camera, a GPS card for location-based tools and navigation, and a USB keypad. Sony also announced the predictable neck strap, stand, and carrying case, along with headphones sporting a remote, and even a microphone.







AS SEEN ON PSP

BIG FRANCHISES GO MOBILE

PSP FACT
Portable gamers in the United States will grow from 23 million today, to 43 million in 2009.
Source: JupiterResearch "Portable Games: Forecasting Growth in Anticipation of Intensifying Competition"



ATV OFFROAD FURY



METAL GEAR ACID

PSP FACT
45,000: The number of public Wi-Fi hotspots to be installed worldwide by the end of 2004. About half of these are in Asia, the other half split between Europe and the United States.
Source: Pyramid Research



DYNASTY WARRIORS



NHL FACEOFF



MEDIEVIL



SPIDER-MAN

PSP FACT
707 million: The number of people predicted to be using Wi-Fi by 2008, up from 12 million in 2003.
Source: Pyramid Research



TWISTED METAL



TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER

DATA STREAM

KONG CRAZY



Ubisoft aquired the rights to develop a game based on Peter Jackson's rendition of *King Kong*. Since the movie is still in pre-production, there aren't any details available on the game, but you can expect to see one very large gorilla.

THE ROCK SAYS

THQ's next *SmackDown!* game for the PlayStation 2 is called *SmackDown! vs. Raw*. Yuke's is once again heading up the project, so expect some great models and an even more in-depth grappling system.

THUG LIFE



Tony Hawk and the gang are back for another round of skateboarding mischief in the sequel to *Tony Hawk's Underground*. See www.1UP.com for more details.

PS2 PRICE DROP

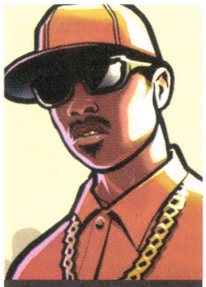
Sony announced that PS2 hardware prices would be slashed starting May 11. The PlayStation 2 Combo Pack (consisting of console, Network Adaptor, and *ATV Offroad Fury 2*) now retails for $149. However, if you feel like that's too good of a deal, then you can opt for the standalone console—which also is priced at $149.

FIRST GTA SCREENS

ONLY FOUR MONTHS AND COUNTING

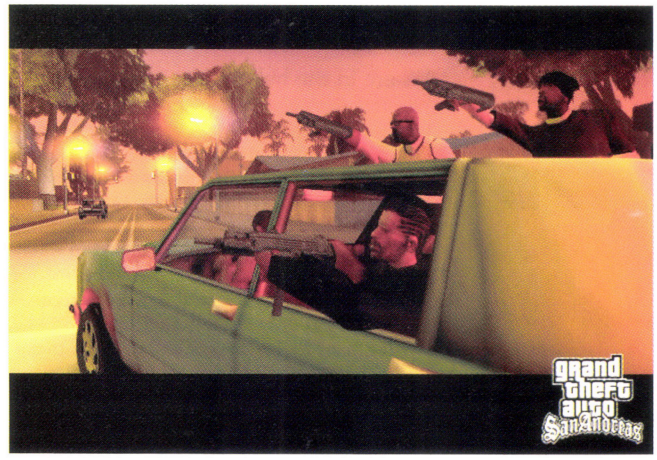
The fifth *Grand Theft Auto* is nearing completion, and over the next few months you'll be absolutely inundated with new screens and info on a daily basis. These shots are the first of many we'll be running between now and October, and they ably show the new game's enhanced graphics. The environments are now much more detailed, as are the character models. Also, as ably demonstrated by the screen shot below, you can ride bikes this time (further fueling the rumor that skateboards will appear also). Check www.1UP.com regularly for more info. «





Rockstar is now citing an October release date for *San Andreas*, with the original claim of October 19 no longer being singled out as a specific date.





SHOT DOWN

CALIFORNIA VIDEOGAME LEGISLATION DEFEATED



Just when you thought videogame violence was out, the politicians pull it back in! While it seems like someone speaks out about videogames and their impact on children and society every other week, a recent bill introduced to the California State Assembly approached the whole situation from a slightly different angle. AB 1792, introduced by Speaker Pro Tempore Leland Yee, proposed that violent videogames such as Grand Theft Auto be deemed "harmful matter" and that such games could not be sold to minors nor could they be displayed in plain view of minors. Additionally, it stressed the need for ESRB rating definitions to be made available upon request from parents.

Despite support from several key organizations, AB 1792 went down in defeat near the end of April. "We simply did not have the votes to pass [the bill]," Yee tells *OPM*. "I am deeply disturbed that rather than protecting our children and giving our parents a tool to help raise healthy kids, the multibillion-dollar entertainment industry was allowed to shoot down necessary legislation."

But AB 1792's failure hasn't stopped similar legislation from going to the assembly. AB 1793 has also been introduced and features many of the same provisions as 1792, except that the language is more lucid. 1793 suggests adult-only games be displayed in closed-off sections of stores, much like those special adult sections in the video store. It also recommends that retailers be fined up to $500 per day for not complying with the law. Even if it doesn't succeed, 1792 and 1793 have both helped open the door for even more legislation down the road that could possibly spread to other states.

LELAND YEE wants California's Lieutenant Governor Cruz Bustamante to know that he hates videogames this much. Either that, or he's relating his latest encounter with Arnold.

THE BILL RECOMMENDS NONCOMPLIANT RETAILERS BE FINED $500 DAILY.

"As a child psychologist, I realize that more needs to be done to protect our children from many of these violent videogames," Yee adds. "Certainly, these bills helped raise awareness of the violence and harm these games can cause. As a result, more parents will hopefully keep these games out of their children's hands, and the industry will make a greater effort in limiting the sale and marketing to children of the most violent games." «



THE OUTSIDER

I WAS JUST WONDERING...

ROBIN WILSON is the lead singer for the Gin Blossoms when he's not pondering the great mysteries of the universe.

Where in the hell is *Legend of Dragoon II*? Why isn't there a great *Batman* game? Snowboarding games are so huge, so why not skiing? Why not one unlockable skier in *SSX*? Why aren't there deathmatches in *Champions of Norrath*? Why only one city in *Need for Speed Underground*? Is there going to be a sequel to *Primal*?

Is it just me, or is there something weird about *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater*? Isn't the title stupid? Are we really gonna wear a dead crocodile? Why does this creep me out?

How many PS2 owners don't know how to put the thing to "sleep"? How many of you are confused by that last sentence?

Why are hit titles $50 and the bombs only $20? Shouldn't we get a break either way? If sales are so huge (and they are), why hasn't the price for a PS2 come down faster?

Why doesn't Sony combine a PlayStation and a laptop PC? Wouldn't that be cool?

Did you know you could link some PS2s via iLink? Why didn't more developers exploit this connectivity before Sony axed it? Will PS3s link together without the Internet? Will PS1 titles play on the PS3? Will PS3 link with the PSP? Will PSP titles play on my television?

Shouldn't Eidos have just scrapped *Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness*? What the heck happened over there? What in the hell were they thinking?

Do you have any idea how much it costs to advertise in this magazine? Why don't publishers spend a little more on page and box art? Why are all game magazines constantly taking potshots at harmless celebrities? How many letters, posts, and game editorials have included the phrase "that's what it's all about: having fun"? Why does the December issue hit newsstands in late October? Why do games appear on magazine covers so far in advance of their release? Wouldn't it make sense to reward the game of the month with the cover every time? Or how about a title that's actually available that month? Would that be so freakin' hard? I don't think so! «

WHY DON'T PUBLISHERS SPEND A LITTLE MORE ON THEIR ADS AND GAME BOX ART?

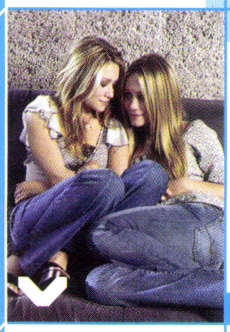
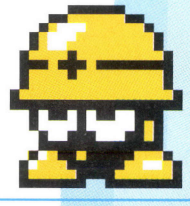
Do all developers think science fiction means shooting at creepy aliens? Why not remake the half-assed PC game based on Arthur C. Clarke's *Rama* novels? Have you read the *Mars* trilogy by Kim Stanley Robinson? Wouldn't that make a great sci-fi RPG?

Will anyone ever be bigger and more consistent than EA?


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JUNE 2K4

THE MONTH AHEAD FOR YOU AND YOUR PLAYSTATION 2

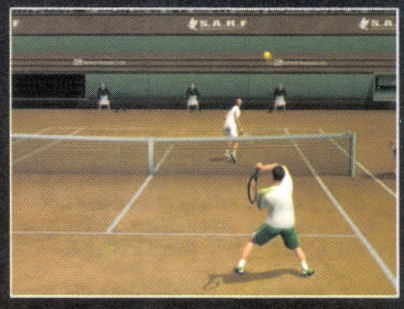
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	Sony first announced the **PlayStation** 13 years ago this month at the Chicago Consumer Electronics Show.	**1**	**2** Time to give your EyeToy a workout. ***Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*** is available for your PS2. [NEW GAME]	**3**	**4** Parents and children are getting forced quality time in the line for ***Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban***—the film opens today.	**5** Pull out the tuna fish, Pelham, Alabama: **Jessica Simpson** performs tonight at the Verizon Wireless Music Center.
	**7** We've never actually smelled napalm in the morning, but we're willing to bet that playing ***ShellShock: Nam '67*** is a more pleasant experience.	**8** Care for a rousing game of tennis? Perhaps you'd prefer frolf? Whatever your sporting pleasure, ***Smash Court Tennis 2*** and ***Ribbit King*** can now be purchased. [NEW GAMES]	**9**		**11** See Nicole Kidman as an animatronic wife who will do your bidding—the remake of ***The Stepford Wives*** is in theaters.	**12** It's **National Meet-a-Mate Week**—single people, get cracking! 
13 1,610 websites go defunct today: **Mary-Kate** and **Ashley Olsen** turn 18 years old.	**14** ***Psi-Ops*** comes out today. **Joe**'s birthday is today. **Flag Day** is today. We're so overwhelmed by the convergence of these momentous events that we're going to lie down.	**15** More exercise for your PS2—***WarChess, McFarlane's Monsters: Evil Prophecy,*** and ***Front Mission 4*** all make their debuts. [NEW GAMES]	**16**	**17** Tomorrow is the last day of the **PlayStation Dual Play Tour**—visit San Francisco's Ruby Skye to check it out.	**18** To celebrate **National Splurge Day**, plant your butt on the couch with a controller in one hand and a bag of junk food in the other. Go on, you deserve it.	**19** If you're in Secaucus, New Jersey, you can attend **AnimeNEXT**, the anime convention happening this weekend. Everyone loves teenage boys engaging in cosplay.
	**21** Rac3 to th3 stor3 to pick up your copy of ***DRIV3R***. Also available today: ***MLB SlugFest: Loaded*** and ***Growlanser: Generations***.	**22** We're not ashamed to admit it: We like men who are mega. Thank goodness both ***Mega Man Anniversary Collection*** and ***Showdown: Legends of Wrestling*** are out. [NEW GAMES]		**24** **The Origins Gaming Convention** begins in Columbus, Ohio. Mothers everywhere are able to enjoy their basements in peace for a weekend.	**25**	**26** If you're not attending the **Third International Congress of Invasive Cardiology of Guadalajara,** then nothing of significance is happening today. Stay home and play games.
27 *Spider-Man* star **Tobey Maguire** kicks off a big week by celebrating his 29th birthday.	**28** ***Spider-Man: The Movie 2*** is not a movie. It is a game. And you can buy it now.	**29** Sing your little heart out: ***Karaoke Revolution 2*** is on store shelves. If that's not manly enough, try ***Way of the Samurai 2*** or ***Ultimate Muscle***. [NEW GAMES]	**30** Are you a swinger? Then have we got a movie for you: ***Spider-Man 2*** opens today.			

16 Pros, 4 Grand Slams and YOU.

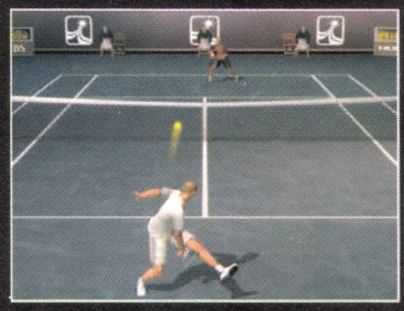




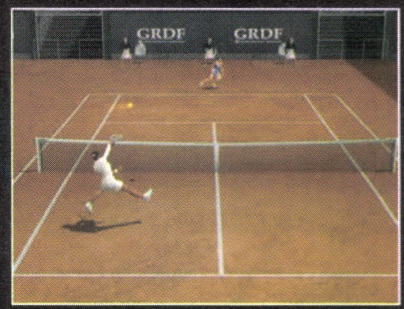
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PlayStation.2

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989 BENCHED

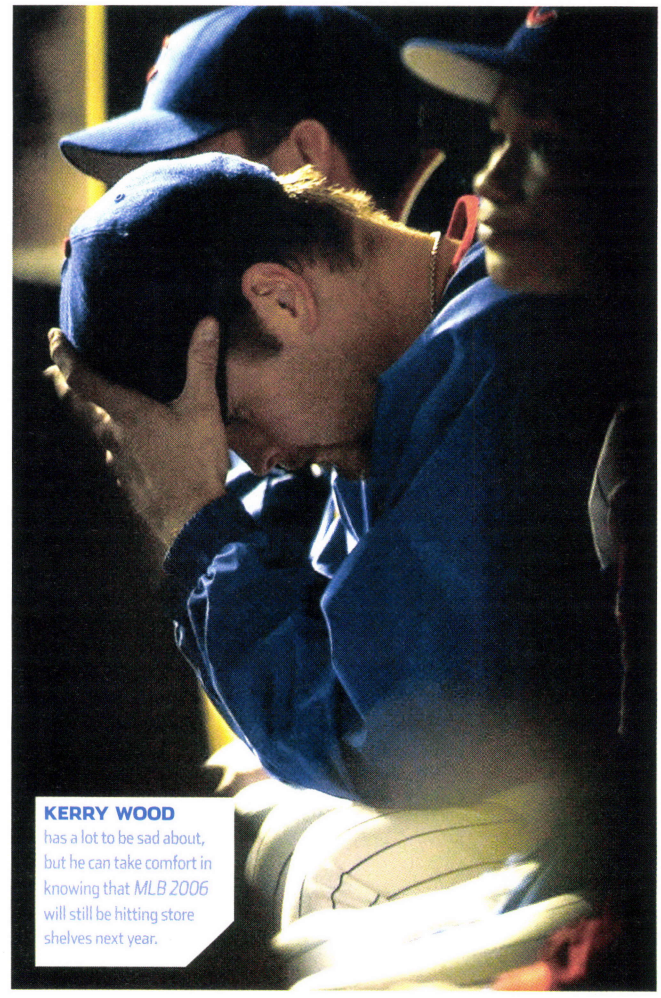
SONY SPORTS FRANCHISES TAKE THE SEASON OFF

It's no mystery that EA Sports dominates the sports genre. *Madden, NBA Live,* and EA's other sports games almost always reach the top of the sales charts, facing little competition from even Sega's excellent games. 989's lineup has almost always taken a backseat, so it comes as no surprise that Sony will not be releasing entries in the *GameDay, GameBreaker, ShootOut,* and *Final Four* franchises for the 2004-2005 season.

THE DECISION HAS A LOT TO DO WITH THE QUALITY OF ITS GAMES.

Though Sony's decision may be largely due to sales (whether the company admits it or not), it also has a lot to do with the quality of the games, which in many cases is nowhere near that of Sega's or EA's titles. "The marketplace and our consumers have told us that we need to improve certain areas," a Sony representative tells *OPM.* "By giving our product teams extra time for development, we believe that our games will not only offer new and significantly improved gameplay, but will also show the innovation that 989 Sports has been known for on PlayStation."

It's not all doom and gloom for 989. The company still has a few projects in the works for 2004 and 2005, including *Athens 2004, MLB, World Tour Soccer,* and a new hockey franchise that will debut this fall. While some of 989's development teams work on those games, others will use the extra time to work on *GameDay, ShootOut,* and other franchises. "Sports is unique in that development cycles are very compressed—often the cycle is only 8 to 10 months to create new features and get them through the QA process," says the Sony representative. "By providing the development teams with additional time, we believe that we will be able to improve the products overall." 989's being quiet about what sorts of innovations the teams are working on, but it promises they'll be significant. «



KERRY WOOD has a lot to be sad about, but he can take comfort in knowing that *MLB 2006* will still be hitting store shelves next year.

ZOE FLOWER

DEAD SEXY



ZOE FLOWER aka "Gamer Girl," creates TV programs and music videos, and looks good doing it. See the details at www.zoeflower.com.

It seems like more and more pop stars are getting started in group efforts like N-Sync or Destiny's Child only to ditch their brothers and sisters for a chance to hoard the spotlight all to themselves. Obviously, the Beyoncés and Timberlakes of the world have proven this can work, so I wasn't surprised to see videogame designers take yet another cue from the entertainment industry. I'm not referring to the current trend of placing real-world celebs in games (which is getting old fast!), but rather the novel act of taking a well-known videogame character from an established troupe or series and spinning out a solo effort.

When you think about it, it's kinda surprising that this hasn't been done a lot more. After all, years of work go into designing, animating, and marketing popular characters, only to see them "typecast" and rehashed in sequels—or worse, forced into early retirement thanks to poor sales. Tecmo had a brain wave when it declawed the *DOA* girls with an offer to hit the beach on Xbox. But what really has my thumbs twitching is the announcement that Namco is taking the dead-sexy fighting diva—one Nina Williams (yes, the "former" assassin with the submission fetish)—from *Tekken* and giving her an action game all to herself! Sure, *Death by Degrees* will be a big step outside the fighting arena, but if anyone can fill those demanding thigh-high boots, it's this girl!

IF ANYONE CAN FILL THOSE THIGH-HIGH BOOTS, IT'S THIS GIRL.

By offering up a character with a devout fan following and building on the background story of what I believe to be the best fighting franchise EVER (yes, I will fight you if you disagree), Tecmo will instantly attract *Tekken* fans to the new game, despite it being outside the character's usual genre. And with Nina getting the green light to push her "creative envelope," you can only imagine what's in store for gamers once she gets her hands on swords, guns, and a 3D free-roaming environment in *Death by Degrees.* There is even mention of stealth gameplay, although I'm not sure how this would work when you're cruising around in stilettos and a shiny purple catsuit....

More important, if this concept catches on, then we could see more game developers getting the green light to build original stories and new scenarios for established "celebrity" characters instead of churning out thoughtless repeats. This could pave the way to exterminating the plague of "sequelitis," not to mention the almost criminal act of packaging a game that relies solely on a popular film or TV license to snag easy profits out of unwitting gamers' pockets.

And if not, at least we get the chance to see Nina in some new outfits. «

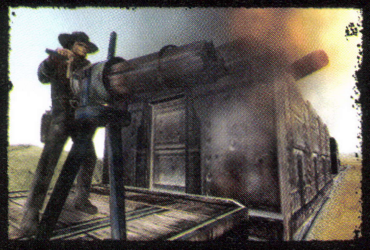
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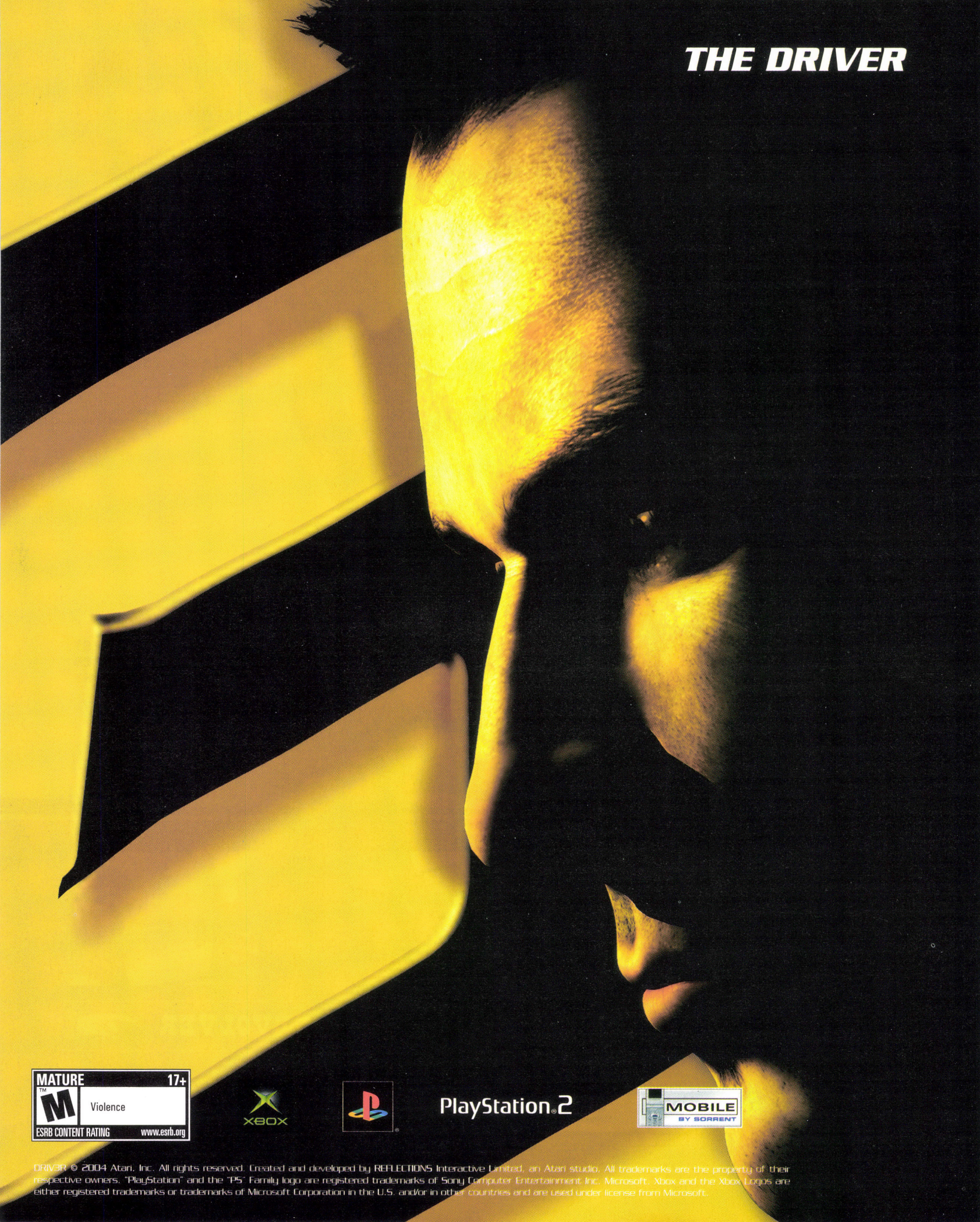


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PlayStation 2

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GAMES THAT MAKE YOU GO...



Illustrations by Matt Taylor

HOT DAMN

These are the games that excited us at E3. The ones that, moments after seeing them, worked us into a massive tizzy. Thumbs up to these games!

COULD BE GOOD

These games, while they didn't wow us completely, surprised us in a good way. It could be because of a trend or a novel twist, but they sparked our attention.

WTF?

These baffled us. It could just be the premise, it could even be the fact that they exist. But immediately afterward, we looked at each other and mouthed, "What the f..."

HMMMMM...

These could go either way. There's lots of potential for either greatness or utter failure. We hope for the best, but the worst can easily happen.

THE ROUNDUP

65 Bard's Tale
55 Burnout 3
62 Catwoman
62 Darkwatch
48 DDR Extreme
65 Death by Degrees
46 Def Jam Fight for NY
55 Enthusia
40 Final Fantasy XII
40 Full Metal Alchemist
60 Godzilla: Save the Earth
62 GoldenEye: Rogue Agent
54 Gran Turismo 4
64 Jak 3
56 Juiced
40 Kingdom Hearts II
65 Leisure Suit Larry: Magna Cum Laude
38 Lord of the Rings: The Third Age
64 Mark of Kri 2
42 Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater
57 Mortal Kombat: Deception
40 Musashi Legends
62 NARC
56 NFSU2
65 100 Bullets
62 Playboy: The Mansion
52 Prince of Persia 2
49 Saru EyeToy
48 Sega Superstars
58 The Shield
44 Spider-Man 2
60 Spy Fiction
56 SRS
51 Star Wars Battlefront
65 T3: Redemption
50 TimeSplitters 3
59 25 to Life
64 The Urbz
37 Viewtiful Joe
37 Viewtiful Joe 2
62 WWX: Rumble Rose

VIEWTIFUL JOE 1 AND 2

HENSHIN A-GO-GO TO PS2

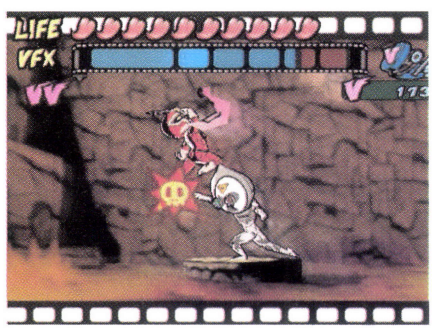
One of the most exciting things we learned at E3 was that we'd be getting not one, but two *Viewtiful Joe* games this fall. While GameCube owners have been pounding their way through cel-shaded side-scrolling action for a while now, we've been sitting idly by, hoping that the rumors of a PS2 version were true—and they are!

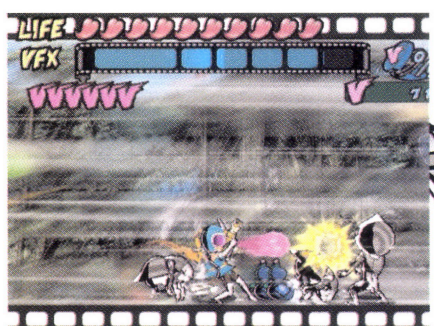
Even if you've never played the GameCube version, it's hard not to be excited—*VJ* is an awesome-looking side-scroller filled with great gameplay, thanks to the crazy superpowers Joe can pull off. Some of these include Slow, which is an awesome version of the tired bullet-time shtick, and Mach Speed, which boosts Joe's speed significantly. As an extra bonus for us PS2 owners, Dante shows up as an unlockable character (he sure has a lot of free time). Considering all this, *VJ* could easily be considered the best superhero game ever.

We're also going "Hot damn!" over the fact that mere months after *VJ1*, we'll get to play *Viewtiful Joe 2*. Not only is it a whole new game, but *VJ2* lets you play as Joe's girlfriend, Sylvia, as well—she's armed with mighty pom-poms and all sorts of unique special attacks. Joe's sweet ride, the Six Machine, also gets a makeover, with new forms to transform into (like a sub, racer, or rocket), and Joe receives the new Replay power, which lets him repeat moves three times for three times the effectiveness (like eating a hamburger thrice to gain triple health). But if you time the Replay wrong, you might find yourself getting hit three times. Ouch.

With this double whammy of an announcement, our year just got a little more viewtiful. «

Viewtiful Joe **Pub.** Capcom **Dev.** Clover Studio **Release** Fall
Viewtiful Joe 2 **Pub.** Capcom **Dev.** Clover Studio **Release** Winter





BACK-TO-BACK
Other franchises with rapidly released sequels: *Lord of the Rings*, *Matrix*, *Kill Bill*, and *Back to the Future*.



LORD OF THE RINGS: THE THIRD AGE

AT LONG LAST, A MIDDLE-EARTH RPG

Ever since EA Games announced its *Lord of the Rings* movie license, geeks have asked the same annoying question: "What's with this action-game crap? I want an RPG!" We'll admit, despite some great action games, many of us felt just as geeky and annoyed about the matter. But soon, the wait will be over when EA releases *The Lord of the Rings: The Third Age*.

Restricted by the movie license, the game won't introduce any characters you didn't see in the three *LOTR* films (sorry, Tom Bombadil fans). However, it expands greatly upon characters we may have caught only the slightest glimpse of. In fact, the warrior you choose to play as won't be Frodo, Gandalf, Aragorn, or anyone else whose name you might immediately associate with Tolkien's epic. "The characters have names and stories associated with them," says Executive Producer Steve Gray. "You start out with one specific character, but very quickly, three others join your party," he adds. And Fellowship members (some voiced by their actual actors) do pop up to help you out during key battles, from the Mines of Moria to the Battle of Pelennor Fields.

Gray suggests that the gameplay more closely resembles *Final Fantasy*'s than, say, *Star Wars: Knights of the Old Republic*'s (Xbox)—its turn-based battle system involves everything from typical combat to riding horseback (or wargback!) for the advantage. However, *KOTOR* fans might revel in the fact that you can be the bad guys after you beat the game, which makes for an entirely different experience in the service of Sauron.

Do *LOTR* fans have another winner on their hands? It's too early to say, but it sure does look that way. «

Pub. EA Games **Dev.** EA Redwood Shores **Release** Fall











WANT BALROG?
You've got Balrog. We're not sure if you confront him at the same time Gandalf bites it, but watch out for Moria's big bad fire dude at some point.

I AM MORK THE ORC
Nanu nanu.

THE GAMEPLAY RESEMBLES *FINAL FANTASY*.



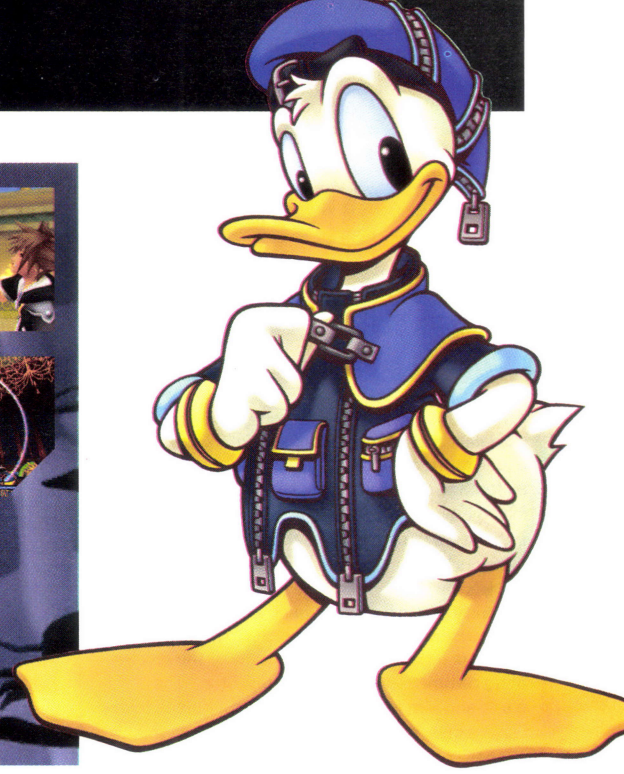
DISSECTING MORIA
Here we see a turn-based battle about to take place in Moria. The lowdown:

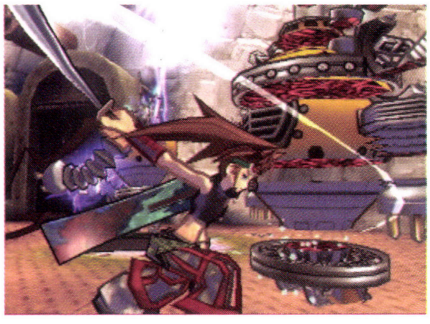
1 The elf maiden specializes in magic.
2 That's not Aragorn—just some other ranger dude (very balanced).
3 The dwarf gets in close for tough melee attacks.
4 Your initial character is this Gondorian. Use his leadership abilities to raise abilities of others.
5 You encountered cave trolls as part of a scripted battle. Random ones occur elsewhere, too.
6 See that fiery glow? The Balrog of Morgoth fights a certain Grey Wizard on the other side. How does this fit into the game's story? Well...we'd like to know, too!









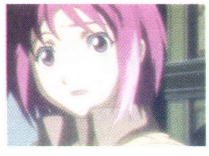














SQUARE ENIX

EVEN MORE HIP TO BE SQUARE

Year after year, Squenix manages to ratchet up our excitement, and it rarely disappoints us. You can read about *Front Mission 4* on page 92, and there are just a couple more months until the epic *Star Ocean: Till the End of Time* hits shelves, but the company's 2005 lineup has us even more excited.

Even if we didn't play it, *Final Fantasy XII* would still have us totally stoked due to who's working on it: Yasumi Matsuno and the rest of his team—fresh from *Final Fantasy Tactics*. The most recent plot revelation is that Vaan does, indeed, have a girlfriend, Penelo (unlike other *FF* games, in *FFXII* the male lead doesn't hook up with the female lead, Princess Ashe). Oh, while not many other details have been released, the combat system has been redone again, and it too is quite different than other *FF* games'.

Kingdom Hearts II is still being kept under wraps. Characterwise, Squenix would only show that Mickey is finally in the game, along with Beast (of *Beauty and the Beast*, not *X-Men*) and even Auron from *FFX*. The battle system has been tweaked, but Squenix won't say much more until later in the year, as it's a 2005 title.

What surprised us a bit was Squenix reviving the *Musashi* franchise. Last seen in 1998, *Brave Fencer Musashi* starred a spunky, blue-haired little samurai in a light action-RPG. The new title, *Musashi Legends*, still looks like a spunky action-RPG with all sorts of slick-looking attacks accompanied by huge onomatopoeic words here and there.

Squenix also announced that it's bringing over *Full Metal Alchemist*, another action-RPG, but this one is modeled on a hit anime series in Japan. We haven't heard about any networks airing the show here, but we do know that DVDs are headed Stateside. The most interesting aspect of the game we've seen is that you control just one character, Edward, but his brother, Alphonse, tags along as an A.I.-controlled NPC.

There's also the weird "*FFVII* sequel" *FFVII: Advent Children*, but overall, it's exciting to see Square break out from more than just *Final Fantasy* this year. «

Final Fantasy XII **Pub.** Square Enix **Dev.** Square Enix **Release** Early 2005
Kingdom Hearts II **Pub.** Square Enix **Dev.** Square Enix **Release** Spring 2005
Musashi Legends **Pub.** Square Enix **Dev.** Square Enix **Release** Winter 2004
Full Metal Alchemist **Pub.** Square Enix **Dev.** Racjin Co. **Release** Spring 2005

KOJIMA'S MESSAGE TO THE WORLD

THE MIND BEHIND THE METAL

On this month's DVD, you can see one of the latest trailers for *Metal Gear Solid 3* (including a look at the oft-discussed "alligator hat"), as well as footage taken from our chat with series creator Hideo Kojima. The video will give you an insight into the way Kojima thinks about his games, while also touching on some of his influences.

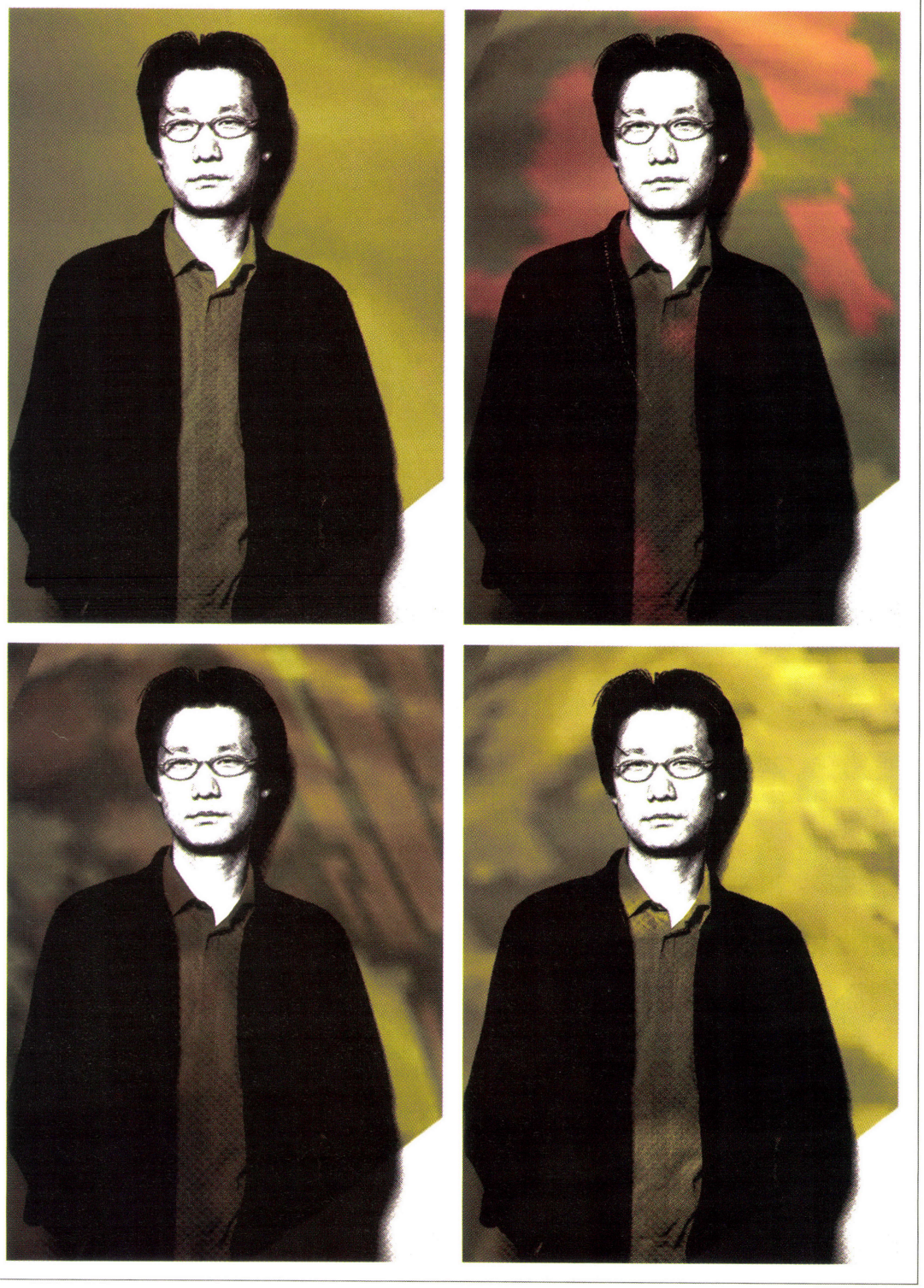
He's a man who certainly takes his work very seriously and is keen to show that his games are a very personal form of expression. To him, game design is art, and he has a dim view of the accelerating commercialization of the industry. "The game and film industries are cynical," Kojima told U.K. games magazine *Edge* recently. "Everything's supposed to be made for the masses, often without any trace of deeper meaning added from the creators.

"Every artifact produced nowadays is much more commercialized," he continued. "The soul has really vanished. Let's blame greed, because it's poisoning the soul. Greed can kill anything."

The soul of the *Metal Gear* franchise is Kojima's obsession with nuclear weapons and their threat to the safety of the world. Aside from being a series of beautifully directed games, the *Metal Gears* (especially the three *Solids*) are Kojima's personal and artistic message to us all.

He was born in 1963, so he is acutely aware of how Japan has changed since WWII as well as the fears of a generation that lived through the Cold War. More than any other game in the series, *Snake Eater* tackles the delicate balance of power between East and West. Set in the 1960s, it deals with a time when paranoia and fear were at their absolute peak, while weaving the story of Snake's destiny into and out of both fact and fiction.

When discussing his games, he often turns to the similarities between games and movies to express his philosophy, citing Alfred Hitchcock and Akira Kurosawa as strong influences. When pushed on what is needed to make a great game, his response is to "read a lot of novels. See a lot of movies. You have to know people." When speculating on the future, his outlook is more progressive than many in his profession. "Eventually, the word 'game' will be gone," he predicts. "What's important is making things fun, and from that we'll be able to make something that has a positive effect on people's lives. I don't think games have done that yet, but one day I'm sure they will, just like movies and novels." «



Pub. Konami **Dev.** Konami **Release** November



WATCH THE VIDEOS

KOJIMA INTERVIEW AND MGS3 TRAILER

If you've seen the videos online but have been frustrated with the crappy quality, you're in luck! Check out the gorgeous *MGS3* trailer, complete with cheesy music!

YOUR MIND IS THE ULTIMATE WEAPON!

FOR MORE INFO VISIT...

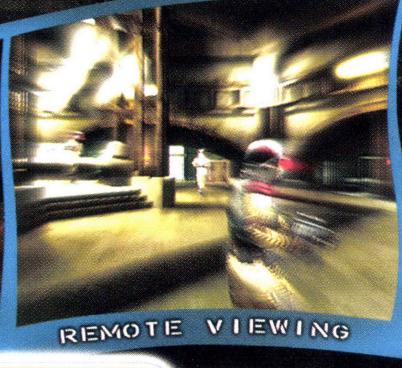
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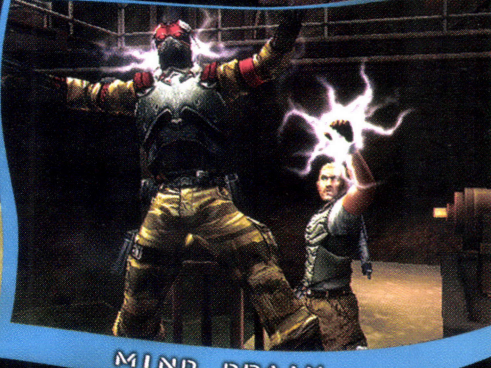
TELEKINESIS



PYROKINESIS



REMOTE VIEWING



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MATURE 17+

M

CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Blood and Gore
Intense Violence
Strong Language

XBOX

PlayStation.2

MIDWAY

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SPIDER-MAN 2

WITH GREAT POWER COMES GREAT PLAYABILITY







In addition to the two *Viewtiful Joe* games, we're jazzed about another authentic superhero title: *Spider-Man 2*. While *Spider-Man* games have steadily become better and better, it'll be hard to top this one because it has a simple but powerful premise: Be *Spider-Man*.

Treyarch has managed to staple *Spider-Man*'s core gameplay on to an open-ended city—for the better. After being dropped right in the middle of Manhattan, you're free to do whatever you want. If you just want to swing above the streets, go ahead. Since Manhattan is pretty darn close to scale, you just have to make sure that your web attaches to something (not hard to do, considering how many tall buildings are around). What's also impressive is that there aren't any load times while swinging around—you smoothly go from neighborhood to neighborhood with nary a hiccup.

Webslinging also demonstrates how awesomely open-ended the game is. If you see some guys mugging a helpless New Yorker, swing on in and start pounding heads. Spot a green exclamation point above someone, and they'll give you a mission. Drop by the pizzeria and start swinging with a hot pie on your back. Go to a flashing blue star to accept a physical challenge (like seeing how fast you can swing through the city). You might even find yourself teaming up with Black Cat to thwart Shocker's latest scheme. There are also plot missions that tie in directly with the movie—these are optional as well. To describe it as "*GTA* meets *Spider-Man*" is not wholly inaccurate—simply because *Spider-Man 2* is both as open-ended and, from our playtime, just as fun as that description implies. «

Pub. Activision **Dev.** Treyarch **Release** June 30

MARVELOUS MARY JANE

If you played the first *Spider-Man* game, you may have noticed that the voice of Spidey's gal pal Mary Jane Watson sounded off. It wasn't your ears playing tricks on you—while Tobey Maguire and Willem Dafoe reprised their respective roles of Spidey and the Green Goblin, Kirsten Dunst did not voice MJ in the game. Your ears can rest easy now, though—Dunst has been hired for *Spider-Man 2*.

OPM You didn't do Mary Jane's voice in the first *Spider-Man* movie game.

KIRSTEN DUNST Was Mary Jane even in that game? They didn't even ask me last time. Or maybe they didn't think they needed me, but now they think that they do.

OPM So why'd you do it this time?

KD I thought it would be fun. I've never done a voice for a videogame before.

OPM Before you signed up for it, how much of the game did you get to see?

KD I actually haven't seen any of it, but I did see an early version of what Mary Jane is going to look like. They showed it to me so that I could comment on her looks.

OPM And how do you like your digital doppelgänger?

KD She looked a little masculine and muscular, like I'd been working out a lot. It was an early version, though. But I don't think I want her to look too much like me—it might freak me out if she looked really similar. « *Paul Semel*



THIRD TIME'S A CHARM
The role of Mary Jane for the first *Spider-Man* movie was originally offered to Kate Hudson and Alicia Witt. However, Dunst did beat out *24*'s Elisha Cuthbert, who also auditioned for the role.

Richard Phibbs/CORBIS OUTLINE



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Remember when the PS2 was first announced and Namco busted out that kick-ass *Tekken* demo with the cool lighting and the amazing crowd dynamics? Where the hell was all that stuff in *Tekken Tag* and *Tekken 4*? The *Fight for NY* team seems to remember that, too, because if you fall into the crowd during a brawl, people move around you and even push you back into the ring. It doesn't sound like much, but it adds enormously to the atmosphere.

A lot of you wanted weapons in *Vendetta*, so the kids at EA have happily obliged. Most of the fights take place in arenas much like this one, so there are often lots of things lying around that are quite handy to hit people with. Bottles are always good, but chairs and baseball bats are even better.

It's all about the bling this time. Like so many games, you need to earn respect in *Fight for NY*, and one way to do that is to make sure you look good. Earn cash and spend it on items from Jacob the Jeweler, the folks who make Sean "P. Diddy" Combs, Justin Timberlake, David and Victoria Beckham, Naomi Campbell, Mya, Busta Rhymes, and 50 Cent look, well...rich.

DEF JAM FIGHT FOR NY

IT'S MORE THAN JUST ANOTHER VENDETTA

When EA and Aki teamed up to produce *Def Jam Vendetta*, they were full of surprises. Not only did they create a genre-busting, culture-bridging brawler packed with hip-hop artists, but they also took all the parts that make wrestling games cool and put them into a grittier, more realistic environment. The new game pushes things even further and has even more hip-hop artists (35 total), from Lil' Kim to Ludacris, Flavor Flav to Ice-T.

Pub. EA **Dev.** EA Canada **Release** September

It's not just wrestling in *Fight for NY*; you have a choice of varied styles, which you can also adapt as you work through the game. Default styles include street fighting, martial arts, wrestling, and kickboxing, but by the end of the game, you'll have tweaked things so that you're mixing, say, kickboxing with submission moves.

We like fighters with dynamic environments, and this is where *Fight* gains from its wrestling-game heritage. You can use stuff like these speakers much like you would use the ropes in a wrestling game. Grab a guy by the back of the head and slam him into a speaker cone. For added fun, stuff breaks, like this speaker here.

OPM PRESENTS THE ULTIMATE

ONIMUSHA 3 DEMON SIEGE

SWEEPSTAKES



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ONE GRAND PRIZE WINNER will receive airfare and a 3-night stay for two at a popular Las Vegas Strip hotel.* In addition, the Grand Prize winner will receive an **ONIMUSHA 3 DEMON SIEGE PRIZE PACK** that includes the following: a copy of the game, a signed poster from the Onimusha 3 team, an Onimusha 3 t-shirt, an Onimusha 3 standee, an Onimusha 3 "Behind the Scenes" DVD, an Onimusha 3 Brady Strategy Guide, a copy of Onimusha Warlords, and a copy of Onimusha 2. A Prize Package valued at $2000!

5 FIRST PRIZE WINNERS will receive the Onimusha 3 Demon Siege Prize Pack (see contents above).

10 SECOND PRIZE WINNERS will receive a copy of Onimusha 3 Demon Siege plus ONE Onimusha 3 t-shirt.

50 THIRD PRIZE WINNERS will receive an Onimusha 3 t-shirt.

*Dates for trip should exclude holidays and are subject to approval by Capcom. Capcom has the final right to choose the hotel. You must be 21 or older to win the Grand Prize. See http://onimusha3.playstationmagazine.com for complete contest rules.

MATURE 17+ M CONTENT RATED BY ESRB
Blood and Gore
Intense Violence

PlayStation.2

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EYE SEE YOU

EYETOY GETS A BOOSTER SHOT

We've always supported the EyeToy simply because it has the potential to not only let designers be creative, but to also bring more converts to our culture. Initially, Sony was the only company that cared about EyeToy, but big-league publishers like Konami, Sega, and EA are now following suit.

When Sony first unveiled EyeToy, journalists assumed that some sort of *Dance Dance Revolution* tie-in would be inevitable. After all, *DDR* machines already ask for gamers to jump and jive with their feet, so they might as well complete the package and work their whole body into the game, right? That's exactly what's going on with *DDR Extreme*. Besides adding EyeToy support to the game, Konami also happened to make *DDR* more challenging.

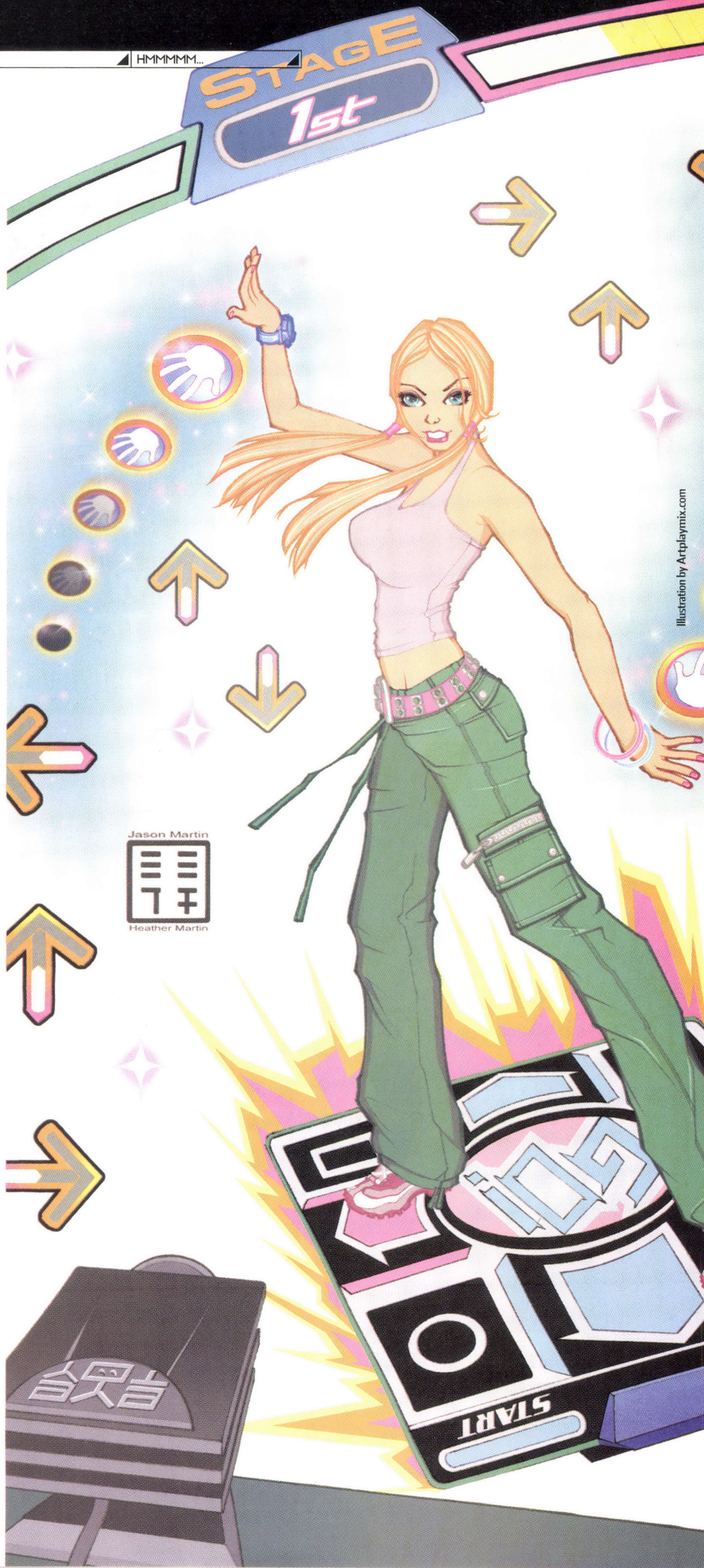
KONAMI ALSO HAPPENED TO MAKE *DDR* HARDER.

Not only do you have to worry about where the heck your feet are smacking the mat, but you have to keep track of where your hands and face are, too. *DDR Extreme* will have a slate of minigames, but it's the three EyeToy-specific ones that excite us. One game, Clean the Screen, is a brutal fusion of *EyeToy: Play*'s Wishi Washi and *DDR*. As you dance away, the screen gets filled with gunk, and you need to wipe it away in order to see your next set of moves. The Hands & Feet minigame adds yet more challenges to *DDR*, as you now have to worry about hitting onscreen icons with your hands as well as keeping up with the rhythm. For those of you who just want to check yourselves out, Watch Me Dance lets you see yourself dancing onscreen.

While *DDR Extreme* turns your PS2 into a video dance machine, *Sega Superstars* firmly plants you alongside classic Sega icons. *SS* is packed with 15 minigames that cover the highlights of Sega's history. You can either race with Sonic, duke it out with someone from *Virtua Fighter*, or play music with *Samba de Amigo*. In fact, the games aren't even limited by platform, as those GameCube-only monkeys from *Super Monkey Ball* make an appearance as well.

With these two confirmed titles, plus EA putting EyeToy support in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* (check out the review on page 94), we're excited about the possibilities that game developers are starting to explore with EyeToy. «

DDR Extreme **Pub.** Konami **Dev.** Konami **Release** September
Sega Superstars **Pub.** Sega **Dev.** Sonic Tram **Release** Fall



A BRUTAL FUSION OF *EYETOY: PLAY*'S WISHI WASHI AND *DDR*.











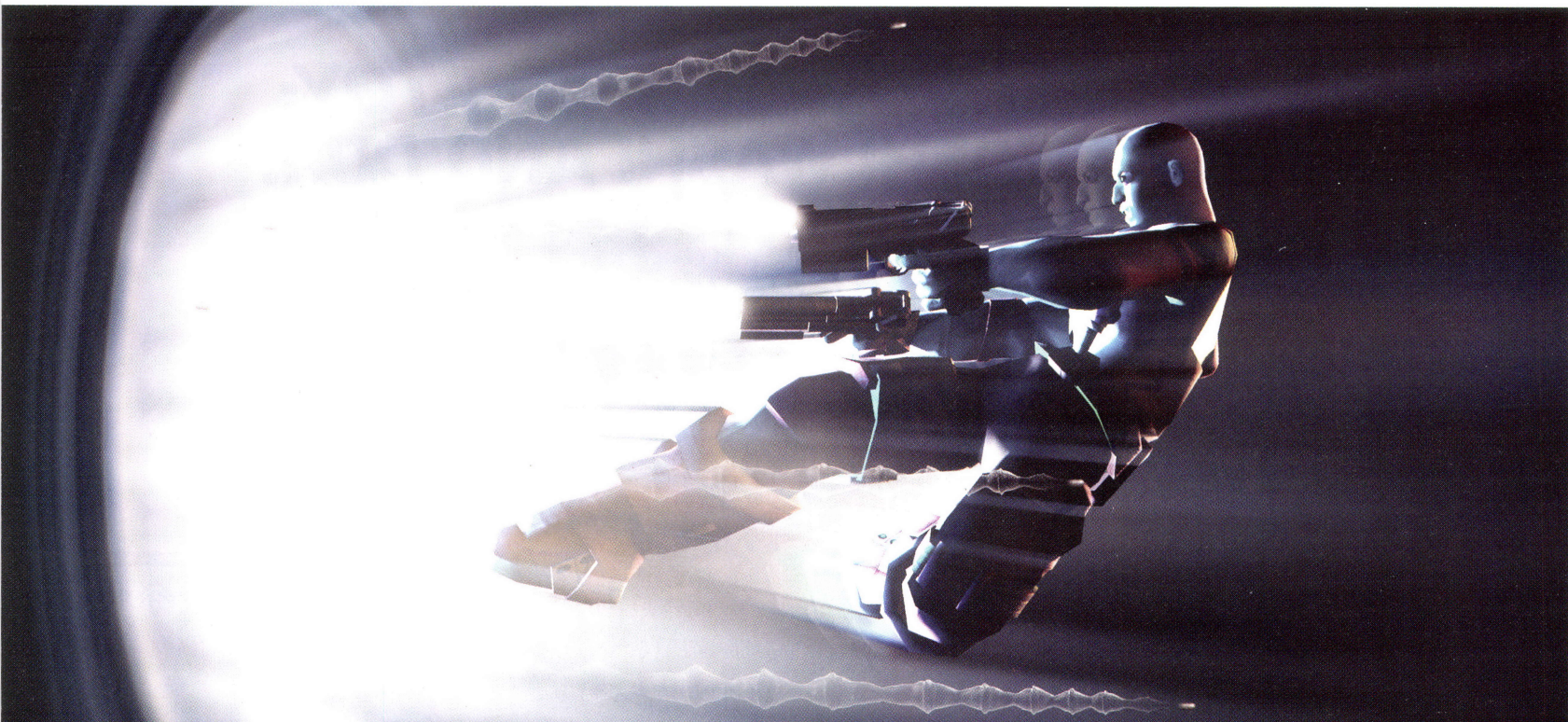


CHAT AWAY!
We just heard that SCEE announced *EyeToy: Chat*, which lets you use your EyeToy as a big video phone (you'd also need a Network Adaptor)! You can also use *EyeToy: Chat* to play games like checkers or chess over the Internet.

MORE MONKEYS
(OR APES, TO BE PRECISE!)



Over in Japan, SCEI announced *Saru EyeToy*—"Saru" is short for *Sarugetchu*, which is what *Ape Escape* is called in Japan. *Saru EyeToy* is apparently a *Mario Party*–style board/party game starring those zany apes. You spin the onscreen roulette wheel with your hand via the EyeToy, move your pieces, and then insert yourself into a resultant minigame afterward. As we're going to press, no publisher has confirmed picking it up, but we expect someone cool to bring it Stateside.



TIMESPLITTERS FUTURE PERFECT 3

WE WANT TO BLAST THINGS TIME AFTER TIME

Hmm, another installment of what we consider the best first-person shooter franchise on PS2. Any fears that *TimeSplitters* was reaching "Fat Elvis" status were washed away once we saw *Future Perfect*.

Future Perfect is more than just the third game's title, it also seems to be a design goal for Free Radical. It plans not only to fix many of the shortcomings associated with the previous *TimeSplitters*, but also to implement a wealth of new features, taking advantage of the fast-paced first-person shooting we've come to love and expect from the series.

For starters, the story line is much stronger this time (perhaps an influence from the story-driven *Second Sight*, another game from Free Radical) and will revolve around Cortez's movement through time. His ultimate goal is to learn more about the TimeSplitters and prevent the ultimate eradication of the human race.

Naturally, all this movement through time means you'll get to travel through a wide variety of places, ranging from an old castle to more futuristic settings. You'll also get to utilize numerous weapons. There are around 20 of them in *Future Perfect*, and most correspond to the time period you're in—except for one, which serves as something of an all-purpose gadget (so far, we've seen it grapple onto things, display maps, and even toss objects at baddies via antigravity).

The single-player mode isn't the only portion of *TimeSplitters* getting a boost. The multiplayer has all of the requisite modes, including co-op, deathmatch, and capture the flag, but there are plans for additional modes that Free Radical is keeping under wraps for the time being. If that's not enough to get you excited, the mapmaker is also getting a nice new coat of polish. Generally, the interface is much easier to use this time around, and it shouldn't be too difficult to get a basic level up and running in a really short amount of time. We can't wait! «









VROOM, VROOM
If your feet get tired, you can always take control of certain vehicles scattered throughout the levels.

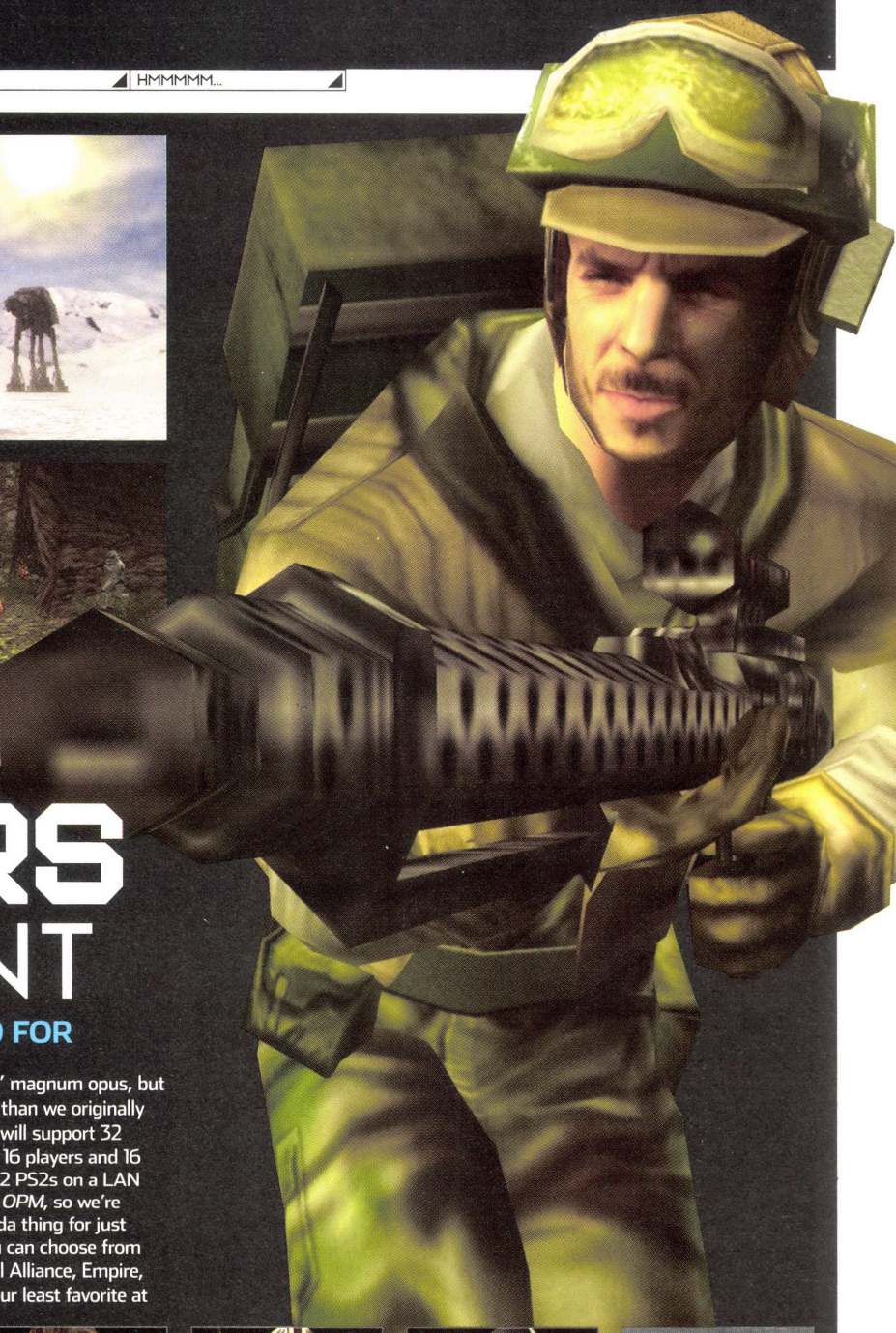
Pub. EA Games **Dev.** Free Radical Design **Release** Early 2005









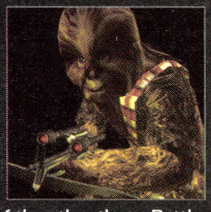


STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT

THE STAR WARS GAME YOU ALWAYS WISHED FOR

There are still six months to wait for LucasArts' magnum opus, but things are already looking considerably more impressive than we originally anticipated. The team has now revealed that the battles will support 32 characters at once—if you're online, that breaks down to 16 players and 16 bots. If you're lucky or insane enough to be able to get 32 PS2s on a LAN (and we'd be pretty hard-pressed to pull that off here at *OPM*, so we're thinking this is going to be a special organized event kinda thing for just about anyone), you can play some truly epic battles. You can choose from 20 different soldier types in four different factions: Rebel Alliance, Empire, Republic clones, and Separatist droids, the latter being our least favorite at this point, simply because they lack the personality of the other three. Battle droids are essentially big walking guns, but who'd really want to be one?









LIVE THE DREAM
Have you ever wanted to be a Wookiee warrior? A Rebel pilot? A death squad commander? A stormtrooper? Now you can live your geeky dream.

BATTLES WILL SUPPORT 32 CHARACTERS AT ONCE.

In case you were wondering, the game doesn't just involve running around *Star Wars*–themed environments like in a giant version of sci-fi *SOCOM*. You also get to jump into vehicles like X-wings, speeder bikes, and most awesomely, AT-ATs (six troopers can jump into what is essentially a big, moving respawn point with guns), as well as gun turrets.

Our favorite part of the game so far? Sign up as a pilot on Hoth (one of the 15 different environments) and run to a snowspeeder, fly out onto the battlefield, and land next to another player. Call him over using voice chat, and he can jump into the backseat of the speeder and (yep, you guessed it) control both the guns and the harpoon gun. Can you tell what's coming next? Go AT-AT hunting! How hard does that rock?

Hard. «

Pub. LucasArts **Dev.** Pandemic Studios **Release** Fall

PRINCE OF PERSIA 2

PRINCE HAS GOT A WHOLE NEW LOOK, BUT NO SYMBOL FOR A NAME

If you played *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time*, you know why we're so excited to see a sequel. (And if you didn't—what the holy hell is wrong with you?) The first game was so damn good that if we were promised nothing more than "more of the same" for a sequel, we'd take it, no questions asked, and we'd like it.

Luckily, Ubisoft ain't gonna play us like that. *Prince of Persia 2* (working title) gives the spunky young Prince—and his environment as well—a major working over. It seems that in the years since *The Sands of Time*, the Prince's life has been a little less happy-go-lucky, turning him into a hardened warrior.

But this isn't just a visual makeover; the Prince's skills have improved as well. Now he can take on more enemies at once through a new "free-form" battle engine. Picture a system similar to the different stances in *Soul Calibur II*, in which each new move allows access to a handful of other moves. For example, let's say you're fighting two enemies at once. You opt to get behind one and grab him by the neck. Now you can use him as a shield against the other guy, break his neck, cut his throat, or chop him clean in half at the waist. The idea is to make combat as open-ended and varied as the rest of the game, which is no small feat.

That chopping-in-half part is another big change from the last game: You'll see decapitations and eviscerations—you'll even be able to chop an enemy clean in half from the top down, watching as the two pieces slowly separate with a slightly disturbing sucking sound. Your enemies will be demonic forces of evil, so they won't bleed...but still, it's quite a departure.

And the story? This, too, has moved in a more adult direction. Now the Prince's primary enemy is a personification of fate itself, tracking him down to exact retribution for the Prince's frequent cheating of death. Defeating fate means traveling to a sinister underworld that's darker, older, and more detailed than anything in the previous game.

So, to sum up: darker, meaner, bigger. Yeah, we're excited. Aren't you? «

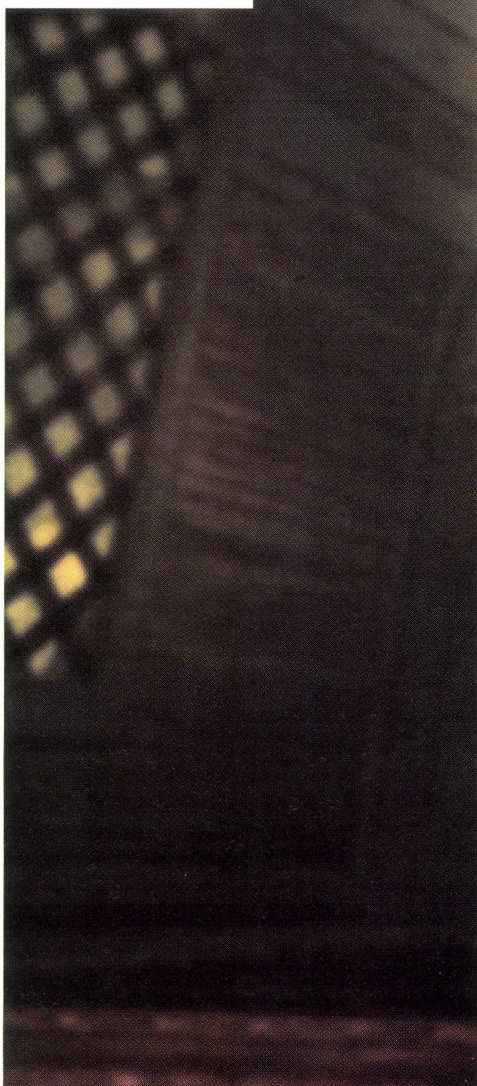
Pub. Ubisoft **Dev.** Ubisoft Montreal **Release** Holidays







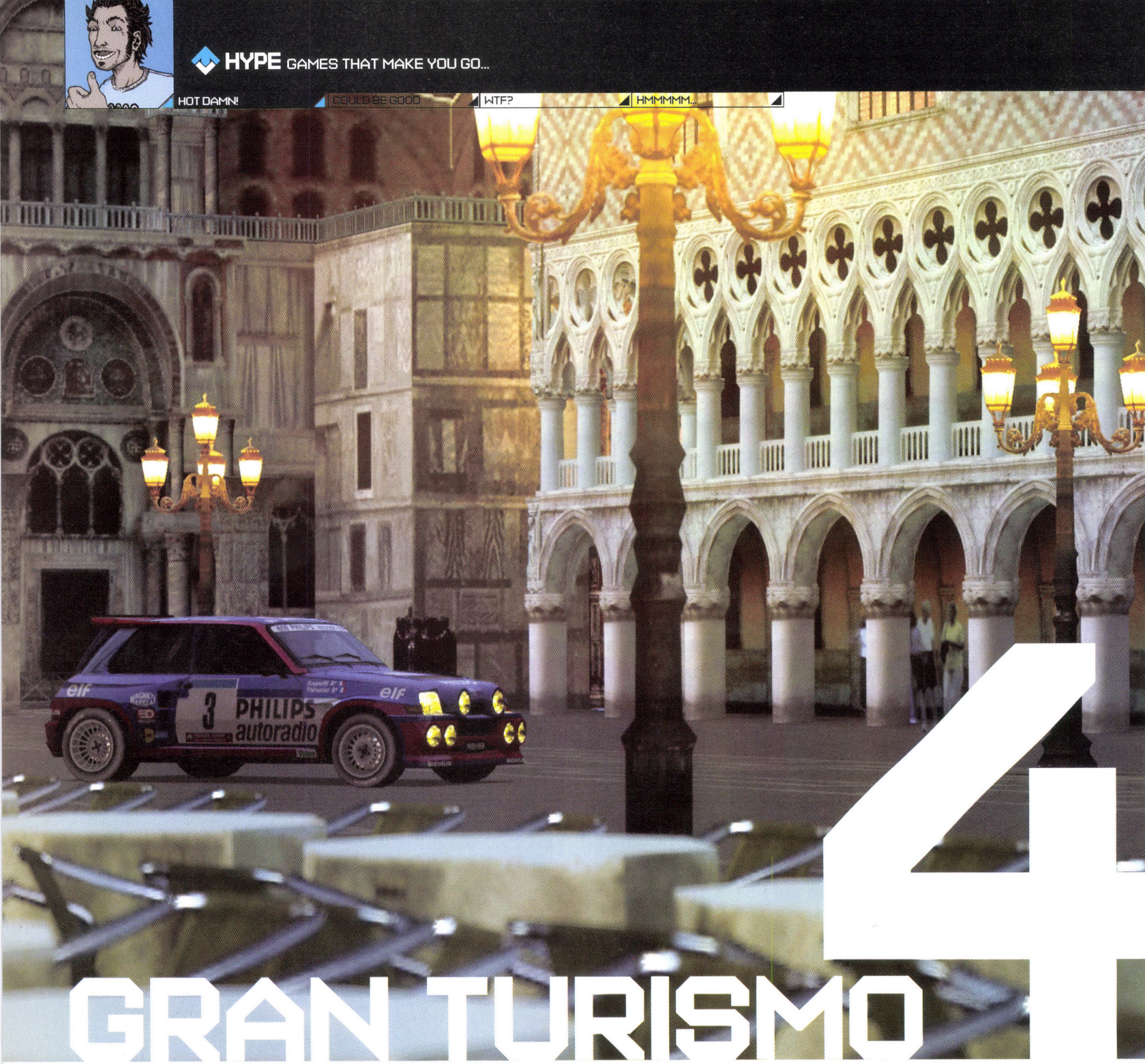




TIME IN A BOTTLE
Apparently, in his post-*Sands* adventures, the Prince picked up an artifact that far outstrips the power of the Dagger of Time. This mysterious artifact will allow the Prince to travel hundreds of years in time—not just a few seconds.



YOU'LL BE ABLE TO CHOP AN ENEMY CLEAN IN HALF FROM THE TOP DOWN.



GRAN TURISMO 4

THE DIFFERENT RACE MODES EXPLAINED

The upcoming *Gran Turismo 4* has four different race modes. GT career simulation mode, which works like it did in *GT3*, takes you through 200 races as you buy and sell cars and upgrade parts. GT online mode is a six-player head-to-head game with voice chat and tons of networking stuff that allows you to set up communities online. GT arcade mode is linked to the career mode. It's pretty much what you'd expect, but you have to open up the cars and tracks in career mode to make it more interesting. Finally, GT photo mode is the new part that hasn't been discussed much yet. You'll be able to (in the words of the press release from E3) "travel around the globe with your car and conduct photo sessions in various popular locations." Sounds glamorous, huh? You can take your car collection to virtual versions of Piazza San Marco, Shibuya, Tsumago, Sagano, and more. Once the photo is taken in the game, you can save it to your memory card and share it online or print out a color copy via a USB printer.

Kazunori Yamauchi, president of developer Polyphony, tells us, "Since the introduction of *Gran Turismo*, [the series] has always had two sides of enjoyable factors—the joy of driving and the joy of watching. Anyone who owns a car is likely to agree that the time spent behind the wheel are moments of happiness, but there is also the moment of happiness when you have parked the car and look back to admire the view. Some might go further and take their car to a scenic point with the intention of taking pictures. The introduction of photo mode has been designed to reflect that enjoyable feeling and bring it to life. It allows the player to bring their car to a variety of beautiful scenic points included in *Gran Turismo 4* and to fulfill their desires of taking photos of their vehicles. By doing so, players can blur the background image and select lenses and filters to allow for most of the photographic techniques possible in real life." «

Pub. SCEA **Dev.** Polyphony Digital **Release** November

BURNOUT 3

DO YOU HAVE A NEED FOR SPEED?

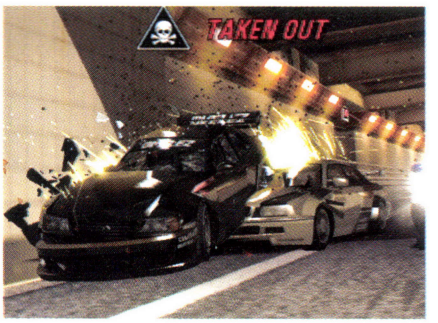
If you think *Need for Speed Underground* feels fast, wait until you slip into one of *Burnout 3's* fantasy rides. The word "fast" doesn't do it justice. If a word did exist to describe the sensation, it would be something like turbocrazybastardfast. *Burnout 3*'s hook isn't just that you drive at crazy speeds, it's that you drive dangerously. Live too close to the edge, and you're treated to spectacular vehicular wreckage. Live right on the edge, though—we mean right on the razor-sharp edgiest of edges—and you get one of the most exhilarating videogame experiences ever. Speed plus massive explosions. What more could you want? That's enough for us, but Criterion is offering a variety of modes, like online multiplayer modes that replicate every aspect of the single-player game, including the "combat" elements where you gain points by taking out opponents. You can even slow down time as your car explodes and guide your disintegrating wreck into the path of an opponent to cause maximum damage.

Burnout 3 lets you smash the crap out of more than 70 different (nonlicensed) cars. They range from takeoffs on American muscle cars to variations on rice rockets and Italian exotica. However, the single most compelling thing about this game is the fact that it can get even casual observers excited. It's like watching the chase scene from *Ronin* on fast-forward. «

Pub. Electronic Arts **Dev.** Criterion **Release** November





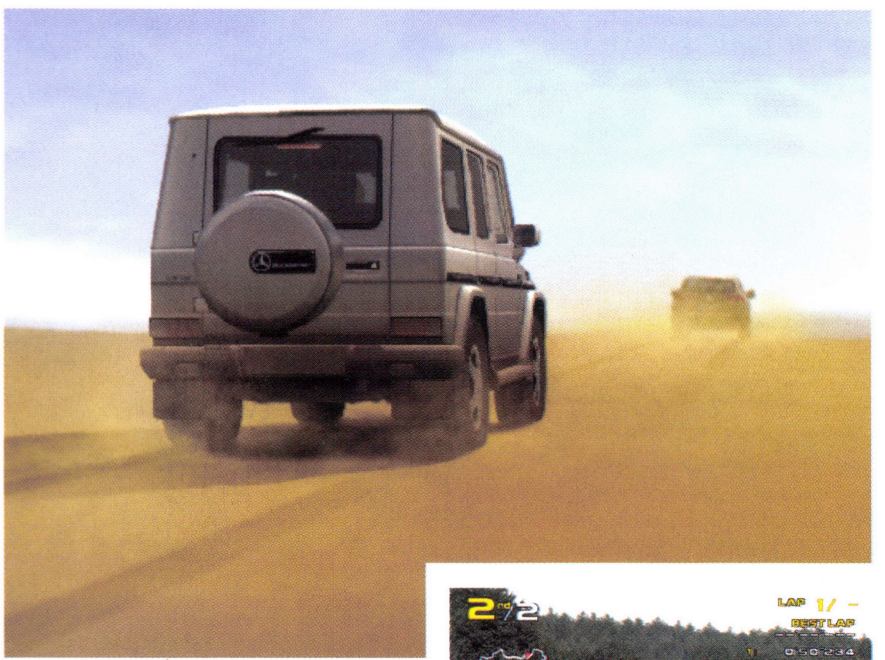








EXPLOSIONS! Possibly the best explosions ever seen in a game, certainly the best car crashes. Check 'em out!







ENTHUSIA

KONAMI TAKES ON GRAN TURISMO

Aiming your racing guns squarely at Polyphony's juggernaut certainly takes some balls, but producer Manabu Akita is confident that he knows what's going to push your buttons. Taking what he learned during his stint at Namco as a designer on *Rage Racer* and blending it with a clever approach to control, *Enthusia* is in the unusual position of being a game that actually brings something new to the table. Forget the licensed cars, of which there will be nearly 200, and the numerous tracks, anyone can replicate that stuff. What's special about *Enthusia* is what Akita dubs the "Visual Gravity System."

The majority of modern racing games do some funky stuff with physics to make sure that cars hunker down on their shocks and lean into corners, but what we've not seen before are effects that help give the impression of what happens to the driver *inside* the car. VGS is a combination of two things. The first is a little icon at the bottom of the screen that shows you the lateral g-forces affecting the car as it moves; the second is a transparent, tinted border around the screen that acts as a kind of viewfinder. As you speed up, slow down, or lean into a bend, this viewfinder shifts around and gives the effect of forcing your focus on the screen to move with the car. It may not sound like much, but as optical illusions go, the effect is pretty remarkable. «

SWEET GRAPHICS Unfortunately, the VGS system isn't visible in the screens that we have here. What you can see, though, is how photo-realistic the graphics look. *Enthusia* will give *GT4* a run for its money on that front.

Pub. Konami **Dev.** Konami **Release** March 2005

PIMP MY RIDE

TRICKED-OUT CIVICS ARE HOTTER THAN EVER, ESPECIALLY ON PS2

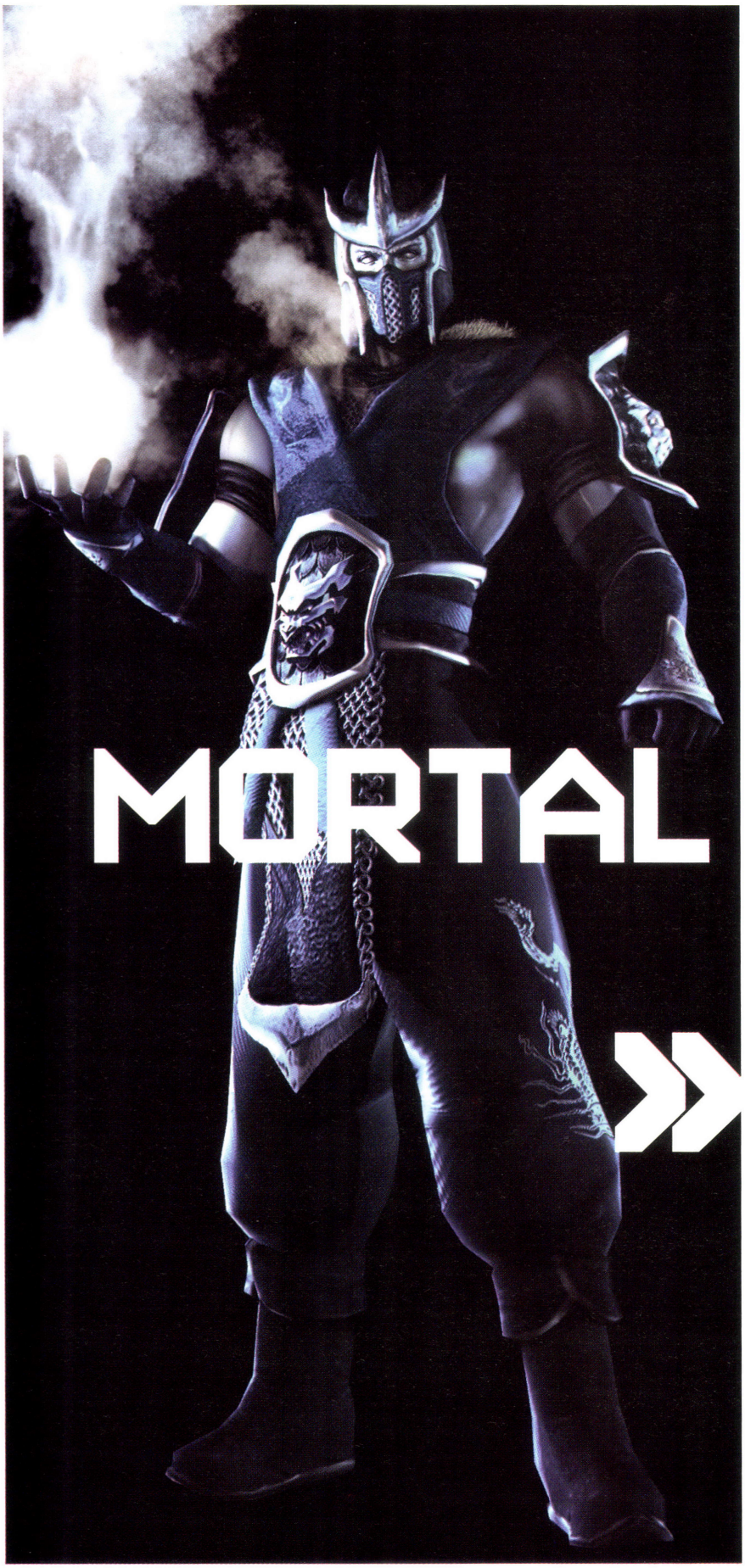
Need for Speed Underground was the right game at the right time, and even though it was one of the best-selling games of 2003, it certainly wasn't the catalyst for racing games changing so dramatically this year. No, it was simply a barometer indicating the way that tastes are changing. It's not enough to pack a racing game with desirable exotics any more. Racing games have to cater to the attainable.

Sure, everyone would love to own a Porsche, and videogames have let you live that fantasy perfectly adequately for more than 10 years now, but ultimately the dream just stays a dream. Tuner culture thrives because you can take any car and turn it into your own personal sex machine. To build up a Civic to a point that it'll make Porsche owners tremble, you still need to spend almost as much as the Teutonic wonder itself costs, but any change you make along the way is an expression of personal style. The tuning scene is all about this self-expression, and it's affecting every facet of the auto industry. All racing games are starting to acknowledge this. Even *Gran Turismo*, arguably the most "conventional" of the upcoming racing games, features modifications quite prominently.

Later this year, three games will tackle the culture head-on. Electronic Arts is returning with a fully tricked-out sequel to *Need for Speed Underground*, Acclaim is bringing us *Juiced*, and Namco has picked up *SRS*, the racer developed by Eutechnyx (*007 Racing*, *Test Drive Le Mans*) that was previously set for release by 3DO. Here's what they have to offer.

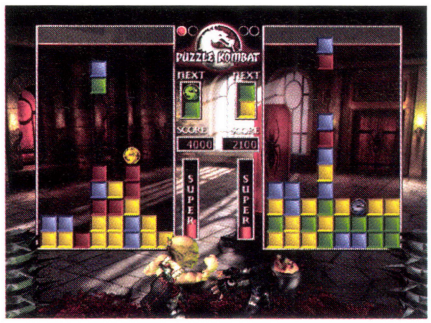
GAMES	WHAT'S THE HOOK?	LICENSED STUFF?	WHAT ABOUT ONLINE?
 Need for Speed Underground 2	The sequel to one of the best-selling games of last year has tons of cars, a huge city to race in, and a completely open *GTA*-style play structure. There are seven different kinds of events, and you're racing for cash and respect.	Yes. Lots of cars, both import and domestic, and tons of different mods that you can tweak like a crazy person to get the best possible performance out of your ride. Bigger wheels this time, too. We like the sound of that.	All the gameplay modes will be supported online, but drag racing is likely to be the most popular, just as it is with the first *Need for Speed Underground*. EA says online play will emphasize "burst" races—so lots of fast drags.
 Juiced	It's all about respect, apparently. And cash, of course. Acclaim is touting "progressive, nonlinear gameplay" that's focused on your character as much as it is on your ride. That's a fancy way of saying it's not just one race after another.	Fifty licensed cars, featuring imports and domestics, including some interesting choices like Holden, Peugeot, and Renault, alongside the predictable rice rockets. Expect tons of licensed mods, too. No tweaking, though.	Acclaim has announced that "you'll be able to take it online and go head-to-head against up to six of your friends." However, no word as of yet on what modes will be available.
 SRS	*SRS* stands for *Street Racing Syndicate*, and whadd'ya know? It's all about respect. There's an emphasis on street racing's illegal nature, as you're running from cops while racing. You also can gamble with cash, cars, or girls. Yes, girls.	There are 20 different cars and 15 different aftermarket suppliers. The cities are real (Philly, Miami, and L.A.), and even the girls are real. There are 18 of them, and they're all models that you'll recognize if you follow the tuning scene.	Namco's statement is that *SRS* features "unprecedented online play," but we don't know what that actually means. Lots, hopefully. There's also two-player splitscreen and four-player system-link modes.

Need for Speed Underground 2 Pub. EA Dev. EA Release November | ***Juiced*** Pub. Acclaim Dev. Juice Games Release November | ***SRS*** Pub. Namco Dev. Eutechnyx Release November

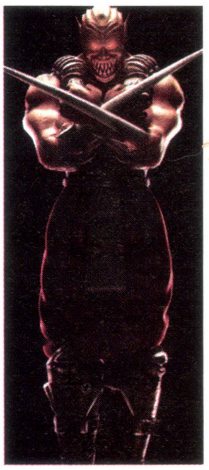


MORTAL KOMBAT DECEPTION





SHREDDER!
What is Shredder doing in this game? Oh wait, that's Sub-Zero. Expect some slice-and-dice action from Baraka as well.



THE BEST NONFIGHTING FEATURES IN A FIGHTING GAME

What surprised us most about this game is that *Mortal Kombat: Deception* offers a whole lot more than just plain fighting. Sure, the fighting engine looks suitably upgraded—the smashing of opponents through walls and floors, in particular, is very evocative of *Dead or Alive*—but it's all the side games that caught our attention. Who would have imagined that a *Mortal Kombat* title would feature a puzzle game, a chess game, and a pseudo-RPG of all things?

If you thought *Puzzle Fighter* could have used more fatalities, puzzle kombat is the mode for you. Match up colors on your side to start smacking your opponent with signature fatalities. If you want to think a little more, select the board game instead. You get to craft a team of 16 characters and work your way to killing your opponent's king piece. Each time you land on a square, you have to fight to maintain it; however, your pieces get weakened in combat (even if they win a fight), and you'll have to heal them through spells or special squares.

What surprised and intrigued us most was konquest, a massive, free-roaming fighting adventure campaign. Here, you start off as a rookie fighter named Shujinko and have him go on quests, earn items and money, and learn a new fighting technique or two. Pretty much every *MK* character will make an appearance, and the large variety of fighting techniques, clothes, and special items will let you develop Shujinko into a custom character that can be used in the normal fighting-game portion of *Deception*.

While *MK: Deception* looks like a good fighting game all around, we're surprised that we also like everything that isn't part of the fighting game. «

Pub. Midway **Dev.** Midway **Release** Fall

THE SHIELD

THE COMMISH TRIMS THE FAT

Police officers have come a long way since Andy Griffith and the candy-coated days of *CHiPs*—the traditional boy scouts we used to know have become gritty smart asses with a questionable interpretation of justice. What surprises us is how Sammy Studios is now taking one of the grittiest cops from cable and putting him into a third-person action game. If you thought Nick Kang pushed the envelope, wait till you meet Vic.

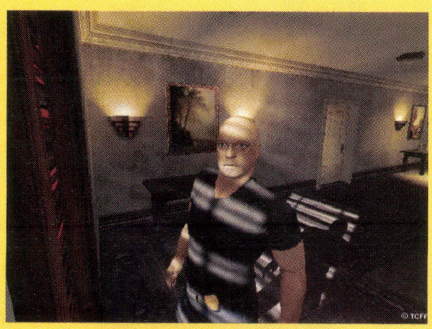
The Shield is the harsh tale of Vic Mackey, a dirty cop who polices the streets of the fictitious Farmington district in Los Angeles. You might liken him to Denzel Washington's character Alonzo Harris in the movie *Training Day*; in fact, both *The Shield* and *Training Day* were inspired in part by the Rampart scandal circling the elite CRASH unit within the LAPD. *The Shield* routinely pushes the envelope of even paid television when it comes to depicting graphic situations—sometimes even eclipsing HBO programming in portraying moral ambiguity and sheer brutality.

INSPIRED BY THE LAPD RAMPART SCANDAL.

How would you make a game out of such a show? Sammy hasn't shown much, but so far, the harshness quotient looks fulfilled. In the game, Vic shoots and abuses the bad guys, even intimidates them for information. Sometimes this means burning their faces on a stove (a reference to a key scene early in season two) or bashing their heads into a wall. Most of the gameplay footage is set in dark environments, boasting lighting effects comparable to *Splinter Cell*'s.

We applaud the risky (and surprising) move Sammy is taking in crafting a game out of the show. Since *The Shield*'s unflinching violence and sordid characters won't be on your PS2 for a while, we encourage you to check out the first two seasons on DVD in the meantime. «

Pub. Sammy Studios **Dev.** Point of View **Release** Early 2005

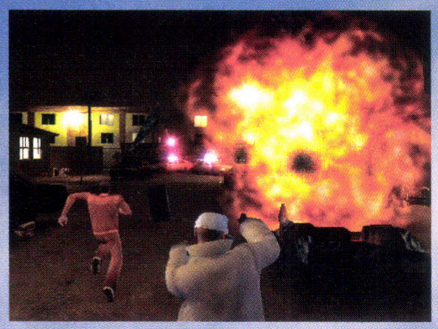






25>LIFE

TIME OFF FOR GOOD BEHAVIOR







LOOK BELOW
This is not an enormous mustache—it's simply a guy holding an Uzi magazine in his mouth.

Fact is, if you're a fellow of any sort living in America, you've already played a variant of *25 to Life*—back in the day, it was called "cops and robbers." If we were the kind of people who'd mash together two games to describe a third, we might call this "*SOCOM* meets *GTA*."

Eidos hasn't shown much, but it has confirmed a few details: There will be a single-player campaign in which you play as a gangster (there's also a rumored campaign played from a cop's perspective), but the heart of the game is the multiplayer mode. Siding with either the police task force or the local gang, up to 16 players per match attempt to establish and hold some turf on the map. As you rise in rank on the streets in single player, you can customize the look of your individual gangster (which carries over to multiplayer). The environments are quite interactive and filled with all sorts of junk, animals, and people you can mess around with.

We're surprised it took this long for someone to make a cops and robbers game. While *GTA* encourages many gamers to play as criminals on television, and while there are other games that encourage law enforcement, only now did someone put the two together. Bravo to them. «

Pub: Eidos **Dev:** Avalanche Software **Release:** February 2005



SPY FICTION

GOOD DUB HAPPY FUNTIME GET!



We've already seen quite a bit of *Spy Fiction*, but it surprised us to see how much Sammy and Access Games are sprucing up the stealth-action game for its North American release. In fact, just about every aspect of the game is being tweaked, including the story line, which is now a little more cohesive and interesting than its Japanese counterpart.

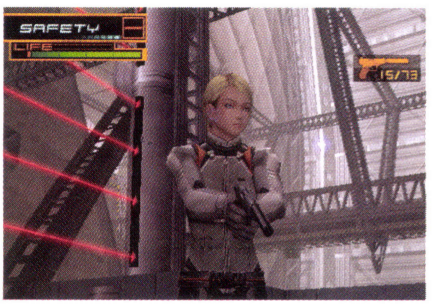
But most of the attention is on gameplay refinements. Your main focus in *Spy Fiction* is to take pictures of characters and use them as a means for assuming the characters' identities (kind of like what went on in the original *Mission: Impossible* series). In the Japanese version, you can only do this with a specific camera that forces you to get in clear view of the target, thus exposing yourself to enemies. Now, you can use sticky cameras (think *Splinter Cell*) to do most of the dirty work while you hide in a secure position. It's a nifty little feature that makes the stealth elements a bit easier.

Of course, the difficulty has been refined to account for such changes. The smarter guards won't have problems detecting you if you make any stupid moves, like clinging to the ceiling in a narrow hallway with wall hooks. Also, if you act out of character too often while in disguise, guards will open fire. Fortunately, you can take them out with a pretty big arsenal of weapons. «

Pub. Sammy Studios **Dev.** Access Games **Release** September

TWO TO TANGO
The two playable characters in *Spy Fiction* have different attributes, but they both have real nice hair.





GODZILLA: SAVE THE EARTH

AIE! GOJIRA!

Anything involving a 40-foot-tall lizard capable of shooting lightning from its mouth makes us pretty giddy, but *Godzilla: Save the Earth* managed to surprise us as well. The game takes the *Godzilla: Destroy All Monsters Melee* formula, which was pretty fun to begin with, and beefs it up with bigger levels, new characters, more insane monster karate moves, online play, and an all-new single-player mode featuring the king of lizards himself.

But this is no ordinary romp for Godzilla. Most missions require him to complete an objective of some sort in order to fight a rival monster in different sections of San Francisco, New York, Monster Island, Tokyo, Osaka, or the alien mothership. In one particular mission, Godzilla has to throw balls of toxic energy into the water before they explode in populated areas of the city. Also, it should please Godzilla fans to know that the movements of the monsters are modeled closely after their silver-screen counterparts, so when Mothra flies into the level, her movement resembles that of a man inside of a huge moth suit suspended by a rope from the ceiling.

It's those little touches that characterize *Godzilla: STE*, but there are plenty of other cool little mechanics thrown in to make the gameplay more interesting, such as the energy-beam duel, in which one beam can only overcome the other if you press the right button at the correct moment. If that doesn't make for a good giant-monster game, we don't know what does. «

Pub. Atari **Dev.** Pipeworks **Release** Fall



WE MUST FLEE
Better watch out when you're fighting through the streets of San Francisco. You don't want to knock over the Ziff Davis office building and squish the entire *OPM* staff.







DID YOU FROLF TODAY?

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(No frogs were permanently hurt in the making of this game.)



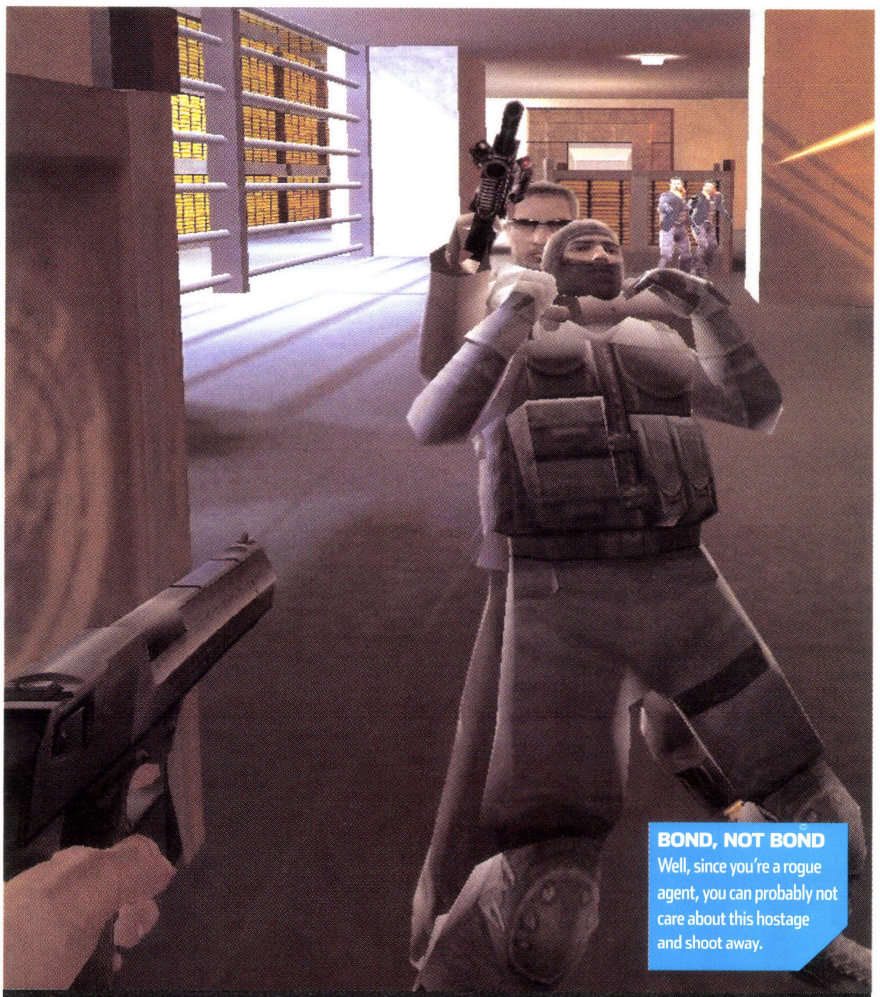




PlayStation.2

BANDAI®

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BOND, NOT BOND Well, since you're a rogue agent, you can probably not care about this hostage and shoot away.

GOLDENEYE ROGUE AGENT

"A SEQUEL TO GOLDENEYE WHERE YOU'RE NOT JAMES BOND, BUT YOU FIGHT HIS VILLAINS." W...T...F?

That is the collective reaction of everyone who first heard about this game, but if you sit down and actually think about it, it becomes a bit less baffling.

So, you're a rogue 00 agent recruited in a fight between Dr. No and Goldfinger. You get an ocular replacement made of gold, hence the "GoldenEye" name. You fight a host of other Bond villains, like Xenia Onatopp, Scaramanga, Oddjob, and Pussy Galore. The game's got all sorts of people working on it; production designer Sir Ken Adam (who did a lot of work on the actual *Bond* movies) is helping with the overall look. Character designer Takayoshi Sato (character designer for *Silent Hill*) will help make interesting-looking enemies. And EA recently hired game designer Dan Orzulak, who worked on minor titles like *Wing Commander III* and *Halo*, to help out, too.

Still, the use of the "GoldenEye" name inspires cynicism among gamers and the press. Here's some free advice, EA: Rename this game "SPECTRE: Rogue Agent." It doesn't create a weird association with *GoldenEye*, and it fits the premise better, since Dr. No actually worked for SPECTRE in the first movie, and everyone remembers that SPECTRE is the original evil organization that Bond frequently fought. «

Pub. EA Games **Dev.** EA Los Angeles **Release** Fall



RUMBLE ROSE

LET THE CATFIGHTS ENSUE

Some Konami exec must have made an observation: "Hey, that *DOA: Xtreme Beach Volleyball* game is doing pretty well on that silly li'l Xbox system. I say we make our own hot chicks game and put it on PS2 so it can sell even more!" Yep, that's pretty much what you've got with *Rumble Rose*—lotsa wrasslin' beauties. Nice. «

Pub. Konami **Dev.** Konami **Release** November



DARKWATCH

IT MAKES PERFECT SENSE

What's the first thing that pops into your head when you think of Westerns? Vampires? Yes! Someone must have thrown darts at a pop-culture reference board to come up with a vampire cowboy as the main character. Despite the crazy premise, this shooter could be good, thanks to plenty of weapons, enemies, and an undead horse. «

Pub. Sammy Studios **Dev.** Sammy Studios **Release** Spring 2005



CATWOMAN

WHY DOES THIS EXIST?

Doesn't EA know that reaction to the upcoming Halle Berry *Catwoman* movie is pretty much universal hate? No matter how good this game turns out—and what we've seen actually looks pretty decent for what it is—we just can't get too excited about a Catwoman who neither is the alter ego of Selina Kyle nor lives in Gotham City. «

Pub. EA Games **Dev.** EA UK **Release** July

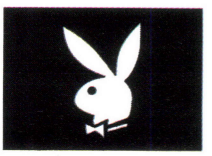


NARC

DARE LOST

Uh, OK. We shot a lot of bad guys in the early days of this game, all to, you know, win the war against drugs. So what do you do in this modern remake? You go native and end up taking drugs for various effects. To be fair, you'll lose the game if you do this, but still, this new feature seems to kind of miss the point. «

Pub. Midway **Dev.** Midway **Release** Fall



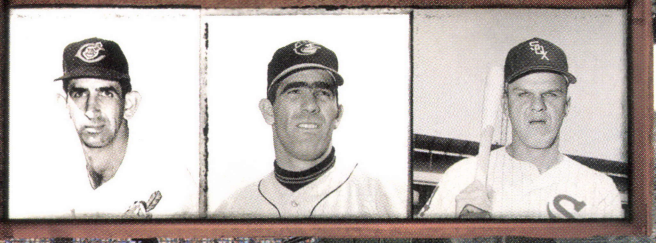
PLAYBOY: THE MANSION

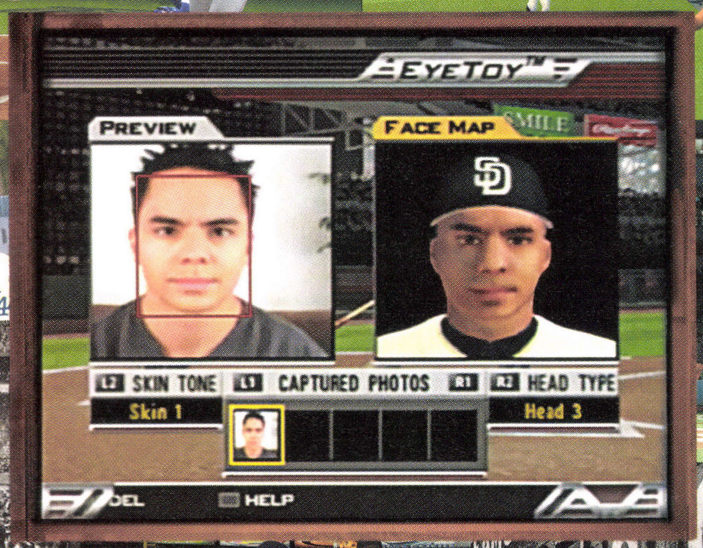
BE A PLAYBOY

Huh? A Playboy strategy game in which you play as Hef? Awesome! This game puts you in the living legend's robe and slippers as you schedule parties, hobnob with celebs, and even set up photo shoots. The best part? You take the pictures. «

Pub. Arush Entertainment **Dev.** Cyberlore Studios **Release** Holidays

As beautiful as the game is, even Major League Baseball® has its ugly side. For every perfect game and 6-4-3 double play, there is a Don Mossi. An Andy Etchebarren. A Bill Skowron. But MLB™ 2005 and EyeToy® change all that as they take you into the ballgame, letting baseball buffs put their mug onto customized players. The boys of summer have never looked better as fans change the face of baseball forever.



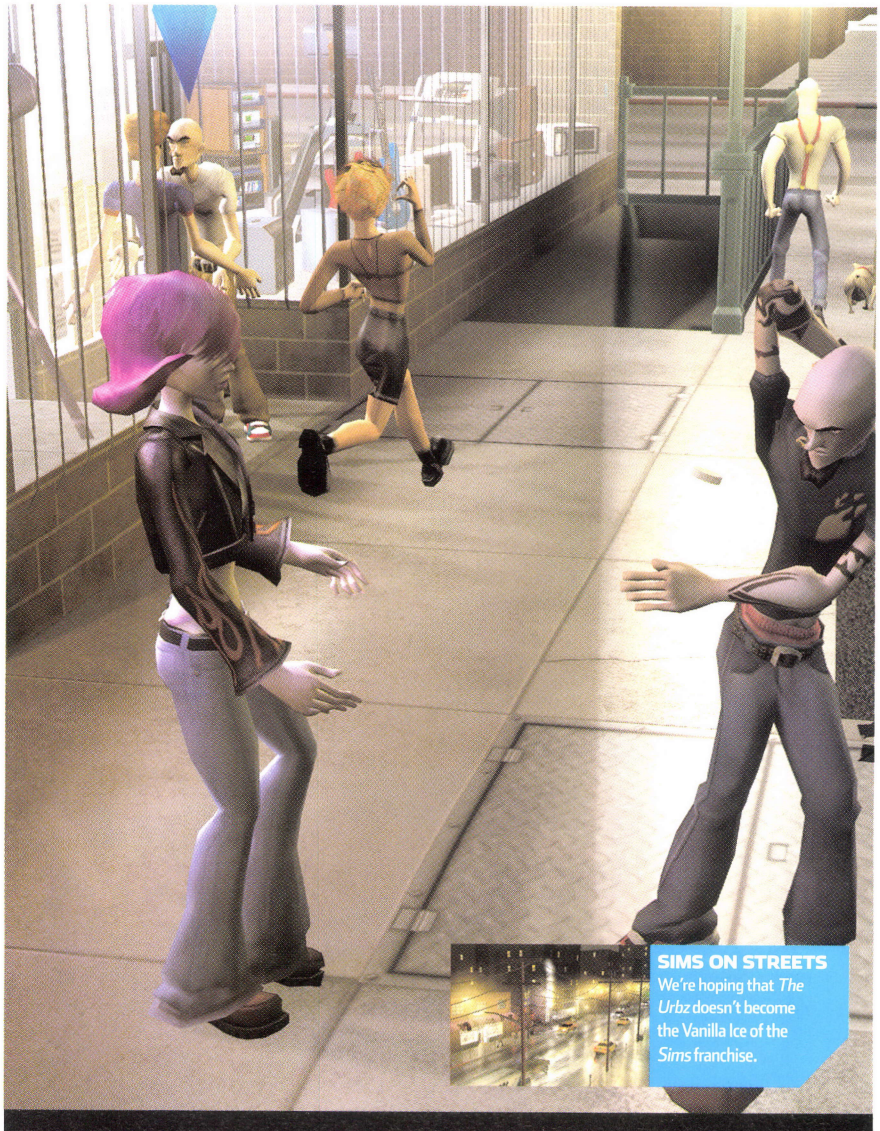




LIVE IN YOUR WORLD. PLAY IN OURS.

EVERYONE
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CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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SIMS ON STREETS We're hoping that *The Urbz* doesn't become the Vanilla Ice of the *Sims* franchise.

THE URBZ

STRAIGHT OUT OF COMPTON—HMMMM...NO

OK, to have the geeky Sims of suburbia suddenly go all street on us in *The Urbz* is just weird. It's odd seeing those beloved and quirky Sims suddenly start walking around shifty, neon-lit streets and concerning themselves over "bling bling." We also know that while Maxis is filled with talented people, "street" isn't the first thing we think of when we think of any game developer, much less the brainiacs at Maxis. So we're a little concerned that this might look and feel too stereotypically urban.

Maxis has assured us that the game is more about hip-hop, stereotypical or not. The move to the city as opposed to the suburbs presents many more gameplay opportunities and challenges. While we do see a lot of hip-hop, there's going to be rock and hippie alternative lifestyles in the mix as well. And the team that's working on this is filled with younger people who actually live in San Francisco. On top of that, Maxis has enlisted an advisory panel filled with East/West Coast experts on fashion, music, and attitude.

Maxis is hoping that between the new team, the advisory panel, and their general experience in good game design, that *The Urbz* will prove itself. We hope so as well, but at first glance, we're still unsure. «

Pub. EA **Dev.** EA Maxis **Release** Fall



JAK 3

PLEASE DON'T HURT US AGAIN

Given *Jak II*'s outrageous difficulty, this sequel—normally a shoe-in for the "Hot Damn" category—has got us feeling a little cautious. Yeah, the new wide-open setting sounds interesting. Yeah, the departure from the cluttered Haven City is good. Yeah, Naughty Dog promises that *Jak 3* really, truly won't be as hard. We're still a little nervous.

Let's be clear that we're not worried that *Jak 3* will be *bad*. There's lots to look forward to. We're curious to finally learn just who the Precursors were, and what role—if any—they play in Jak's current world. We look forward to enhanced hand-to-hand combat, hoverboard mods, and beefed-up guns.

We're just don't want to get hurt again. Is that so wrong? «

Pub. Sony CEA **Dev.** Naughty Dog **Release** Holidays



RISE OF THE KASAI

AKA, THE MARK OF KRI 2

You might disagree (and, given message board posts we've read, we know some of you do), but we found 2001's *The Mark of Kri* to be a bit disappointing. It had some great ideas—mixing multi-enemy melee combat with stealth and even archery—but the execution left us wanting a bit more. Maybe that's what we'll get with *Rise of the Kasai*, which takes place both 10 years before *Kri* and a decade afterward. Rau and his trusty bird Kuzo return for this new adventure, this time joined by the hero's nimbler sister, Tati. Yes, she's the one kicking ass above in the middle of a new sweet kill animation, the likes of which anyone who played *Kri* is very familiar. Expect more, and you can even play cooperatively with a friend—yes, even online. «

Pub. SCEA **Dev.** Bottlerocket Entertainment **Release** Early 2005



DEATH BY DEGREES

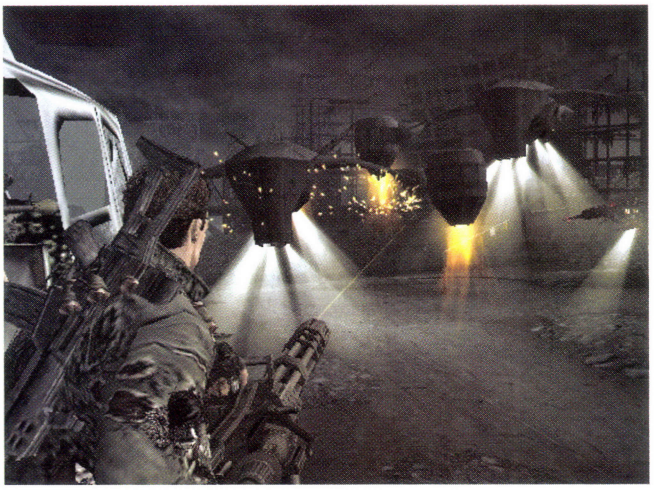
NINA KICKS IT SOLO

Before Nina started kicking ass in *Tekken*, she proved herself worthy of competing in the Iron Fist Tournament as one of the world's premier assassins. Yeah, yeah, we know that already—but not until this fall's *Death by Degrees* will we get to see what made her stand out so much.

The game centers on Nina's use of all sorts of trademark martial-arts moves (and gunplay, including sniping) to single-handedly take down a secret terrorist organization. *Matrix*-like focus moves and the ability to pinpoint opponents' most vulnerable body parts highlight her special abilities.

It all sounds cool, but the time we've had with *Death* has left us less than impressed—it just doesn't control very well. Can Namco fix this by the fall? «

Pub. Namco **Dev.** Namco **Release** Fall



T3: REDEMPTION

REDEEM THE LAST GAME?

If you've played the wonderfully horrible *Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines* first-person shooter, you can understand why we're a bit skeptical of this new *T3* game. But to be fair, *Redemption* takes an entirely different approach to the *T3* universe. Most of *T3: Redemption* takes place from a third-person perspective (instead of first person), which allows for more melee combat. *Redemption* also lets you do things that simply couldn't be done in previous *Terminator* games. You can take control of most Skynet vehicles and visit locations that have never been seen in any other movie or game, like the area where the machines are attempting to gather energy from lightning. We hope *Redemption* gets over the hurdle of *ROTM*. «

Pub. Atari **Dev.** Paradigm **Release** Fall



BARD'S TALE

SINGALONG TIME!

There's quite a bit to like about this game. The triumphant return of one of gaming's oldest franchises. A slick-looking update of the *Norrath* engine. A spell system based on summoning creatures to serve as the NPCs of your party. The fact that if you pick up something that's not as good as what you have equipped, it automatically becomes money (no need to haul stuff back to town). A conversation system that works by choosing general attitudes, not specific phrases like in other games. A promise to be funny.

That last bit could make or break the game. We like what we see, but we're dorks who have played all kinds of RPGs and get the jokes. But sometimes, jokes just aren't funny. This could either be an awesome RPG that's genuinely funny or an OK RPG that's really unfunny. «

Pub. InXile Entertainment **Dev.** InXile Entertainment **Release** October



100 BULLETS

EACH ONE MARKED "TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN"

***100 Bullets* happens to be** an amazing comic series filled with equal doses of gritty noir and well-thought-out conspiracy theory. It's the kind of comic in which shady people end up talking in bars or confess secrets in darkness. So let's make a third-person action game out of it!

Even though *100 Bullets* writer Brian Azzarello is onboard, he admitted that the comics aren't suitable for a game. So he wrote a new, shooter-friendly, action-filled script. There are also going to be lots of guns and a melee combat system filled with violent counters and human shields.

If the graphics and A.I. get cleaned up, it could work. Then again, it might just be better to, well, read the book instead. «

Pub. Acclaim **Dev.** Acclaim Studios Austin **Release** Fall



LEISURE SUIT LARRY: MAGNA CUM LAUDE

CAN FUNNY DO IT ALL?

In the '80s and '90s, the *Leisure Suit Larry* series set itself apart from other PC graphic adventures with the humorous exploits of Larry Laffer...and his inability to score with the hotties. Now that he's older, it's up to his nephew, Larry Lovage, to be his generation's quintessential loser. The same kitschy, sophomoric humor that marked his uncle's games pervades *Magna Cum Laude*, though the absence of creator Al Lowe's involvement has us a bit worried. That said, what we've seen of the new game definitely has its laugh-out-loud moments. But are humor—all 90,000 words of it—and minigames (akin to Whack-A-Mole, Tapper, etc.) enough to keep gamers entertained for several hours? We'll see. «

Pub. Vivendi **Dev.** High Voltage **Release** Fall

ALL-IN-ONE FILM

You know, there's one movie that happens to encapsulate the main message of every game on this spread: *Desperado*. It features a mariachi man (*Bard's Tale*) filled with action (*T3: Redemption*) and lots of bullets (*100 Bullets*). Antonio Banderas totally kicks ass (much like Nina does in *Death by Degrees*), and there are some fairly humorous spots (*Leisure Suit Larry*). It's the second in a trilogy, in which people weren't sure if the third would be good (*Jak*) and Salma Hayek fights alongside Antonio (like Rau and Tati in *Rise of the Kasai*). If this spread were to have an official movie tie-in, *Desperado* would be it!



ANIMANIA

THE LATEST DOSE OF SCI-FI GLAM ROCKERS AND PRETTY GIRL-BOYS

MUSIC TO YOUR EARS

Yoko Kanno fans will get a double dose of her superb compositions later this summer. Manga plans to release the first volume of *Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex* on July 27, containing the first four episodes of Kanno-scored sci-fi action and extra Tachikoma comedy bits, while Bandai debuts *Wolf's Rain* the month before on June 22. *Wolf's Rain*, the latest project from *Cowboy Bebop* production house Bones, may not have the incandescent power of its original creation, but it's a charming bit of werewolfian drama, and a Yoko Kanno soundtrack can make even *Brain Powerd* watchable. *Wolf's Rain* should also be airing on the Cartoon Network's late-night lineup as you read this.

GIRLS WHO DIG BOYS WHO DIG GIRL-LOOKING BOYS

Another entry in the "chicks dig it" file—*Gravitation*, the wonderfully angst-ridden tale of aspiring boy rock stars and the boys and girls who may or may not love them. It's cute, it's often funny, it's even more often wildly overdramatic, it features every popular male voice actor you can think of, and it's crammed to the gills with subliminal messages commanding viewers to compose reams of homoerotic fan fiction. The perfect choice to convince the ladies you're on their wavelength—pick up volume one from Right Stuf on June 29.

HERE IS BRILLIANCE

Media Blasters is picking up the slack of releasing Central Park Media's backlist on DVD, it seems. *Here is Greenwood*, the classic shoujo series released on VHS some years ago, makes its digital comeback at the end of August in a brilliantly priced package. The entire three-hour *OVA* series, chronicling the hilarious adventures of a high-school dorm full of oddities, comes out on one disc on August 31. When it's not bizarrely funny, *Greenwood* is surprisingly touching—you owe it to yourself to check this out.

COMING ATTRACTIONS...

April's Anime Boston convention saw a handful of hot licensing announcements. Bandai is bringing over more *Digi Charat* episodes and *Onegai Twins* (the sequel series to *Onegai Teacher*), ADV Films has the beautiful ballet adventure series *Princess Tutu*, Geneon officially announced Satoshi Kon's bizarre sci-fi series *Paranoia Agent*, and FUNimation picked up long-time fan favorite *Kodomo no Omocha*, meaning its speed-fueled kids'-show stylings should find their way onto American television sometime soon.



POSITIVELY CONVENTIONAL

If you missed the Anime Boston convention, fret not—there are plenty of other opportunities for you to take advantage of. In the first weekend of July alone, you can attend conventions in Sao Paulo, Brazil; Paris, France; Krakow, Poland; and Anaheim, California. For more details of upcoming events, check out www.fansview.com/consked.htm.

MEGA ZONE TWO THREE

ADV Films continues its welcome string of '80s flashbacks with *Megazone 23 Part 1*. The first of three volumes arrives June 1, expanding on the adventures of Reagan-era sci-fi glam rockers trapped in what none of them knows is a giant colony spaceship. Great stuff in the vein of *Macross* and *Bubblegum Crisis*, with a soundtrack hearkening back to the Jim Steinman-esque tunes of a more innocent time in animation.

WIND BLOWING THROUGH TOWN...

If you missed volume one in April, the second volume of *Kaze No Yojimbo* arrives from Bandai on June 8. Inspired by Dashiell Hammett's *Red Harvest* (in turn the source material for Kurosawa's *Yojimbo* and Eastwood's *Fistful of Dollars*), this particular version of the nameless stranger coming to town takes place in the modern age, as an understated tough guy arrives at a small Japanese village with uncertain motivations behind him. It's hard-boiled action with a first-rate soundtrack. «

Buying a Video Game?

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CHECK THE RATINGS ON EVERY VIDEO GAME BOX

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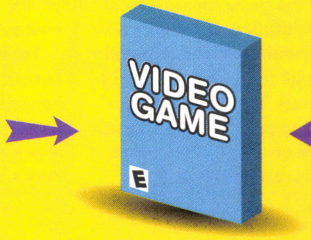












ON BACK



BLU IN THE FACE

SONY CONTINUES TO PUSH ITS NEW DISC FORMAT

You may have heard people talking about it at parties or even a casual mention of it on the news, but few in the general gaming populace really know what Sony's Blu-Ray disc technology actually is—and rightfully so. These days it's all about the standard DVD, a format that has caused millions worldwide to toss their VHS players into the trash and embrace better visual quality and sound. Movies aren't the only medium to benefit from the technology. Most of the games you play on PS2 use the DVD format, which lets developers squeeze more of just about everything into a game.

However, in a few years, Sony hopes its Blu-Ray technology will overtake standard DVDs by making its way into stand-alone players, PCs, and the PlayStation 3. The great thing is that you won't have to get rid of all those DVDs you already bought, since the technology is backward compatible. Also, the technology itself allows for an even better picture (that can take advantage of HDTV sets) and sound, thanks to the 25GB of space on a single-layered Blu-Ray disc, as opposed to a standard DVD, which holds 4.7GB.

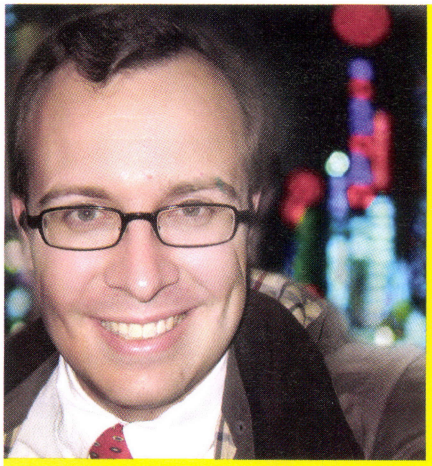
PlayStation 3 games will equally benefit from the technology, but the system may not be an all-in-one entertainment center like the PlayStation 2. While there are already several consumer electronics giants backing Blu-Ray, other corporate entities are more hesitant, namely the movie studios. With so many competing technologies on the horizon, Hollywood wants to wait and see which format makes the most sense. Unfortunately, creating Blu-Ray discs would require a major investment in a lot of new manufacturing equipment, which in turn would slow down the entire adoption process. The next several months will be crucial if Sony is to realize its vision for the next PlayStation. «

ROUND 1, FIGHT!
Sony's biggest threat comes from NEC and Toshiba in the form of another type of blue-laser technology. These discs can squeeze only 15 gigs onto a single layer, but unlike Blu-Ray, the cost for upgrading manufacturing equipment will be relatively minimal, since the discs are the same physical size as current DVDs.



Blu-Ray discs are paper thin, literally! More than half the disc is made out of paper to help cut manufacturing costs.





JAPAN TOWN

THE VIEW FROM OVER THERE

ANDREW VESTAL currently teaches English in the magical Land of the Rising sun, where Pocky is king and the insane rock stars are plentiful.

When Bam Entertainment announced plans to publish *Bujingai: The Forsaken City* in the United States, its press release played up the game's "Hong Kong cinema" style and "design work from the creators of *Cowboy Bebop* and *Trigun*." Conspicuously absent was any mention of Japanese rock star Gackt. To anyone familiar with the Japanese version of the game, this is a most impressive feat of circumlocution, somewhat akin to discussing *Kill Bill* without mentioning Quentin Tarantino. Leaving him out of the announcement is extraordinarily suspicious. What doesn't Bam want American gamers to know? Who is...Gackt?

Gackt Camui was born on July 4, 1540, or so he claims; Gackt Camui is really strange. Gackt also says he's European. He claims to have developed psychic powers as a child after nearly drowning. He prefers soft candlelight to harsh electric bulbs and handwritten letters to typed ones. It seems adjusting to the modern world can be difficult when you're 464 years old. Gackt's interviews with the Japanese music press are infamous for their deadpan inanity.

Gackt began his musical career in 1994, singing for Malice Mizer, a visual kei (read: Goth) band. In '99, he split off and began a successful solo career, complete with a total image makeover. Gone was the Gothic mummery; in its place came an androgynous, Ziggy-esque space-cadet look. Gackt's new image is one of interdimensional love and peace.

HOW DID SOMEONE SO CLEARLY INSANE END UP FAMOUS?

How did someone so clearly insane end up famous and successful instead of panhandling beneath bridges? Because underneath the bombastic space guitar and apocalyptic choral arrangements are solid songwriting and catchy hooks. Gackt may be goofy, but he also knows how to rock out—he's basically the Darkness with an anime villain backstory. His eccentricity gives him an obsessive work ethic and a strong, almost personal relationship with his fans. Instead of the usual musical shovelware, Gackt's greatest hits album features new arrangements and recordings of all his singles to date—arrangements almost universally considered superior to the original album versions.

Gackt recently began branching out into other media, starring in the well-received 2003 film *Moon Child*. *Bujingai* is his first game. What sort of game is it? 1UP.com editor David Smith describes it this way: "You press buttons and rainbows appear all over the screen." This is accurate to a degree. But *Bujingai* also features solid gameplay; it earned a silver award from *Famitsu* and is one of the better "stylish hard action" titles. In short, it sounds like the perfect Gackt vehicle: ridiculous flamboyance masking surprisingly competent skill. «



OPERATION FASTLINK FUN FACTS
Number of searches conducted: 127
Number of countries searched: 10
Number of computers seized: 200
Pieces of software found on one server: 65,000
Value of seized pirated property: $50 million
Getting modded by the FBI: priceless

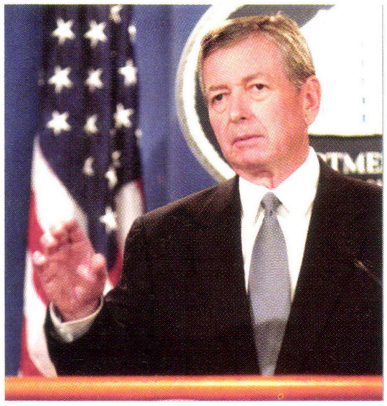
THEY FOUGHT THE LAW

AND THE LAW WON

Operation Fastlink: It's not the name of a new first-person shooter from Ubisoft but rather the title given to the largest international antipiracy raid ever. Headed by the FBI, more than 120 searches were executed in a span of 24 hours across 27 states and several countries, including Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Hungary, Israel, and Sweden. Normally, such operations target businesses or brick-and-mortar establishments where stacks of pirated games, movies, and other materials are found. Fastlink is different in that it marks the first concerted effort to go after pirate groups releasing materials via the Internet.

"The individuals and organizations we are discussing use the Internet to steal and make available to a select group of individuals at little or no cost movies, games, music, and computer software," said Attorney General John Ashcroft in a very grammatically awkward statement. "When a movie is stolen and illegally distributed, it affects everyone from the carpenter who builds movie sets to the producer to the concession stand clerk at the movie theater. When educational software is illegally distributed, it affects the computer programmer as well as the distributor and the computer software salesman."

THE CYBER DIVISION WILL CONTINUE TO HUNT DOWN PIRATES.



It won't stop with Fastlink. The U.S. government's Cyber Division (which sounds suitably idiotic) will continue to hunt down pirates by monitoring IRC channels and popular peer-to-peer file-sharing software, which help contribute to the billions of dollars filmmakers, publishers, and developers lose every year. "These businesses contribute billions of dollars to the gross domestic product," Ashcroft added. "But this economic growth is threatened by online thieves."

However, a country still at the top of the piracy list is China, where copyright laws are loosely enforced. This lack of enforcement discourages outside companies from coming in: Sony recently released the PlayStation 2 in China but drew back from the initial target of launching in five cities, selling the system in only two cities due to piracy concerns. «

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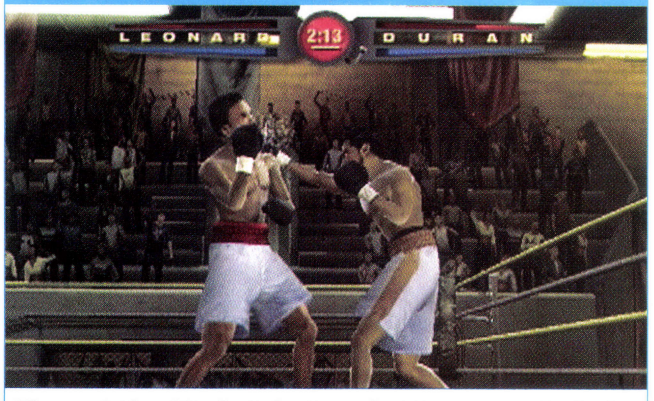
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BY THE NUMBERS

IN ASSOCIATION WITH EB GAMES electronics boutique

PS2 TOP 20 SALES

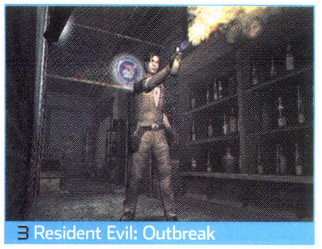
Every night is fight night here at *OPM*. Since Scooter and Giancarlo are the youngest, they're usually the ones that the rest of us force to strip down and jump into the tub of Jell-O. And then we make fun of them.



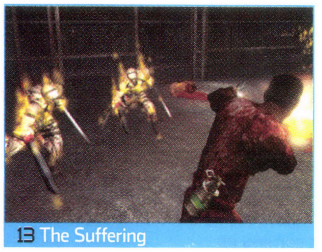
The man in the white shorts has jumped out to a commanding lead.

	Title (Publisher)	
1	Fight Night 2004 (EA Sports)	●●●●
2	NBA Ballers (Midway Sports)	●●●●
3	Resident Evil: Outbreak (Capcom)	●●●◐
4	MVP Baseball 2004 (EA Sports)	●●●●◐
5	Hitman: Contracts (Eidos)	●●●●◐
6	Onimusha 3: Demon Siege (Capcom)	●●●●◐
7	All-Star Baseball 2005 (Acclaim)	●●◐
8	Final Fantasy XI with HDD (Square Enix)	●●●●●
9	MLB 2005 (SCEA)	●●●◐
10	Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3 (Ubisoft)	●●●●
11	MX Unleashed (THQ)	●●●●
12	Syphon Filter (SCEA)	●●●
13	The Suffering (Midway)	●●●
14	James Bond 007: Everything or Nothing (EA)	●●●●◐
15	Drakengard (Square Enix U.S.A.)	●●
16	Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm (Ubisoft)	●●●●
17	FIFA Soccer 2004 (EA Sports)	●●●●●
18	Backyard Baseball (Atari)	●●◐
19	Need for Speed Underground (EA)	●●●●◐
20	NBA Street Vol. 2 (EA Sports Big)	●●●●●


2 NBA Ballers


3 Resident Evil: Outbreak


6 Onimusha 3: Demon Siege


13 The Suffering

Source: EB Games, April 2004. Numbers reflect the sales at EB and its affiliated outlets and don't include other retail outlets. That's probably why you'll never see *Deer Hunter* crack the top 10. Japan's top 10 and the top 10 rentals come from other sources. Game descriptions written by the *OPM* staff. They're the Top source: Guinness World Records.

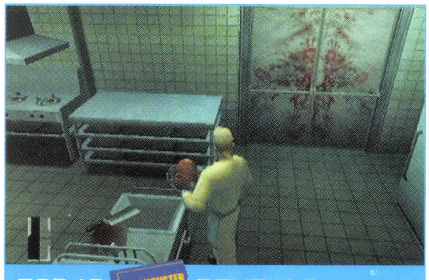
PS1 TOP 10 SALES

1	Final Fantasy VII	Square Enix
2	Final Fantasy Chronicles	Square Enix
3	Final Fantasy Anthology	Square Enix
4	Final Fantasy VIII	Square Enix
5	Hellboy: Asylum Seeker	DreamCatcher
6	Final Fantasy IX	Square Enix
7	Final Fantasy Tactics	Square Enix
8	Final Fantasy Origins	Square Enix
9	Test Drive 5	Accolade
10	NASCAR Thunder 2004	EA Sports



JAPAN'S TOP 10 PS2 GAMES

1	Dragon Quest V	Square Enix
2	Derby Stallion 04	Enterbrain
3	Galactic Wrestling	Bandai
4	Monster Hunter	Capcom
5	Crimson Tears	Capcom
6	Nobunaga's Ambition: Tenka Sousei	Koei
7	Dynasty Warriors 4: Empires	Koei
8	Generation of Chaos IV	Idea Factory
9	Doko demo Issho: Toro to Nagareboshi	Sony
10	Gunslinger Girl Vol. 1	Marvelous Entertainment



TOP 10 BLOCKBUSTER RENTALS

1	Hitman: Contracts (PS2)	Eidos
2	NBA Ballers (PS2)	Midway Sports
3	Hitman: Contracts (XB)	Eidos
4	Resident Evil: Outbreak (PS2)	Capcom
5	Fight Night 2004 (PS2)	EA Sports
6	Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow (XB)	Ubisoft
7	All-Star Baseball 2005 (PS2)	Acclaim
8	Rainbow Six 3 (PS2)	Ubisoft
9	Manhunt (XB)	Rockstar
10	James Bond: EON (PS2)	EA

TOP 10 SALES, ALL SYSTEMS

1	Ninja Gaiden (XB)	Tecmo
2	MVP Baseball 2004 (PS2)	EA Sports
3	Splinter Cell Pandora Tomorrow (XB)	Ubisoft
4	Pokémon Colosseum (GC)	Nintendo
5	Battlefield Vietnam (PC)	EA
6	Unreal Tournament 2004 (PC)	Atari
7	Final Fantasy XI with HDD (PS2)	Square Enix
8	Metal Gear Solid: Twin Snakes (GC)	Konami
9	MVP Baseball 2004 (XB)	EA Sports
10	Harvest Moon (GC)	Natsume

TREND SPOTTER

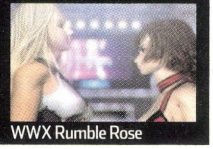
We've noticed a significant increase in the number of fighting felines, which couldn't make us happier—who doesn't love a good cat fight? Meeee-owwww!


Suikoden IV


Monster Hunter


Shrek 2


Catwoman


WWX Rumble Rose

THEY'RE THE TOP

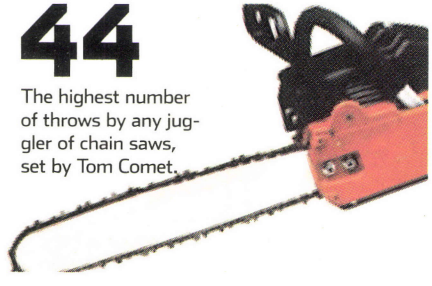
Champions from all walks of life.

19

The distance (in centimeters) that Kevin Cole shot a piece of spaghetti from his nose, establishing a world record.

44

The highest number of throws by any juggler of chain saws, set by Tom Comet.



153

The most clothespins ever clipped to a human face, in this case that of one Garry Turner.



WCG
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Electronic Gaming Monthly
Computer Gaming World
1UP.com
Samsung Electronics

WCG 2004

World Cyber Games

Grand Final in San Francisco

- Date : Oct. 6 -10 (5 days)
- Venue : Bill Graham Civic Auditorium, San Francisco
- No. of participants : Approximately 700 players from 60 countries
- Prize money : $400,000
- Official Games : 6 PC Games and 2 Console Games

6 PC Games	StarCraft® : Brood War™ WarCraft® III : The Frozen Throne™ Counter-Strike™ : Condition-Zero Need for Speed™: Underground FIFA Soccer 2004™ Unreal™ Tournament 2004
2 Console Games	Halo™ (Xbox) Project Gotham Racing 2® (Xbox)

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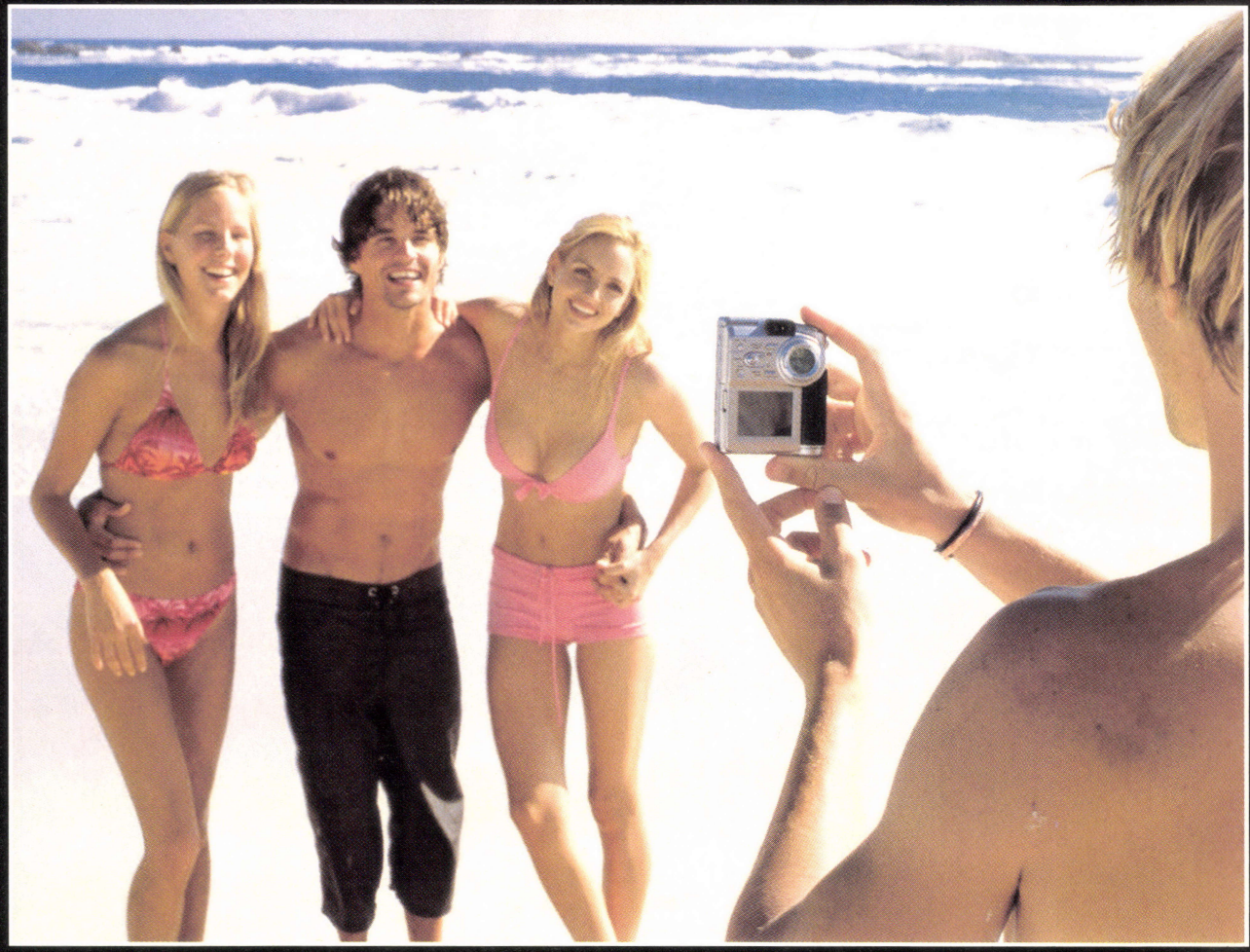


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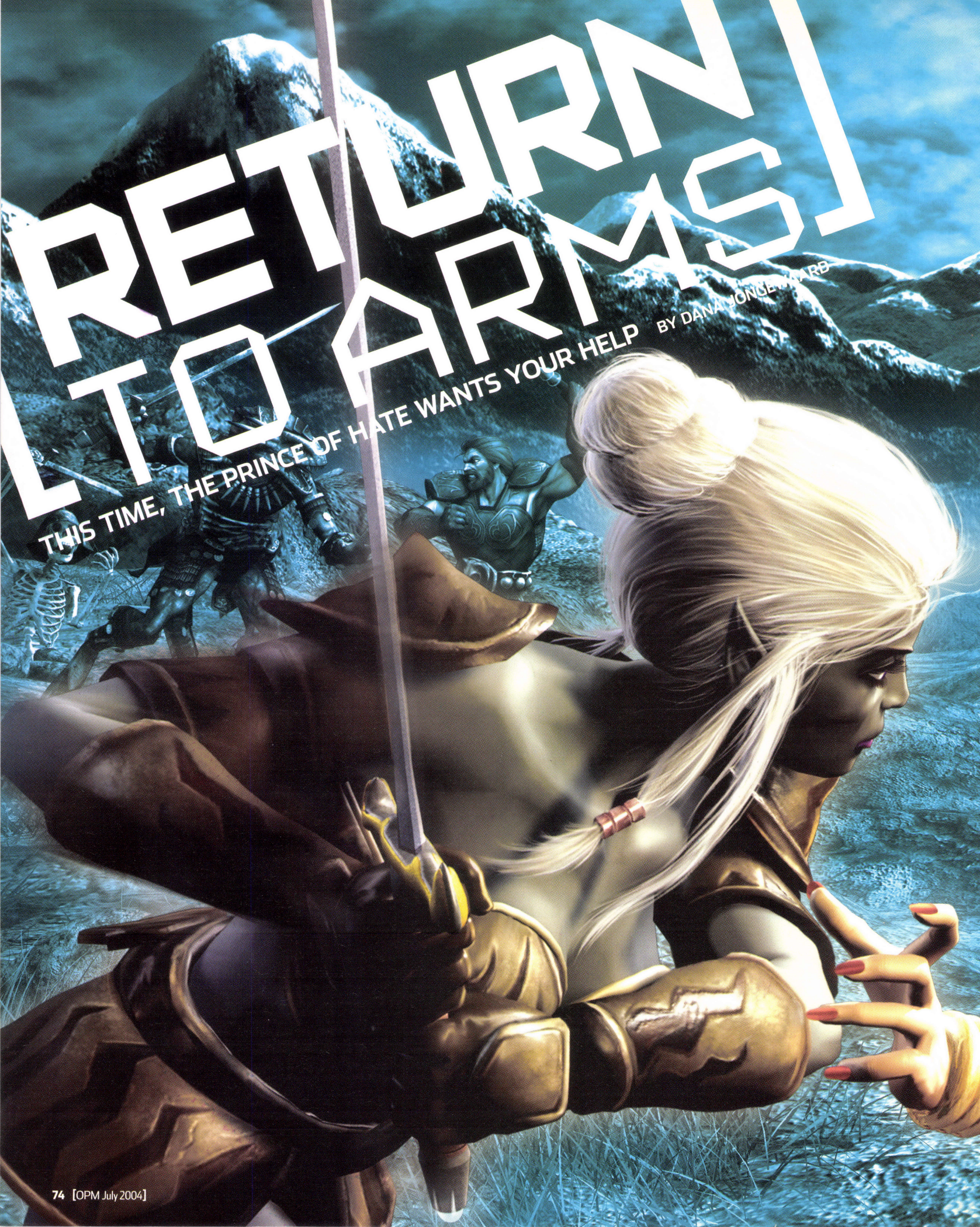
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RETURN TO ARMS
THIS TIME, THE PRINCE OF HATE WANTS YOUR HELP
BY DANA JONGEWARD



No one likes to be good all the time. Sadly, societal conventions dictate that you repress these urges for the sake of fitting in. When that guy budges in front of you at the coffee shop, you can't just knee him in the back or shove him out of the way. And you can't grab the cell phone from the woman talking loudly next to you on the bus and chuck it out the window.

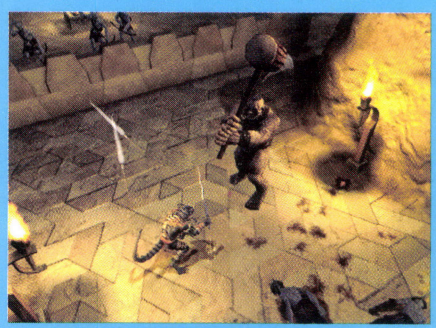
But nevertheless, sometimes, you really want to be bad.

Which is why when we visit the offices of Snowblind Studios, we're thrilled to find out that we'll at long last be able to indulge our dark side. And what better way to be bad than to help the Prince of Hate take over the world for the sake of evil?

RETURN TO ARMS IN 60 SECONDS

- Play on the side of either good or evil
- Play one of two new races, the Vah Shir berserkers or the Iksar shaman
- Import characters from the last game
- New level cap of 80
- New player-versus-player maps for one-on-one direct combat
- Play medal rounds to unlock side quests, unique items, and PVP maps

["THIS TIME, WE'RE ADDING A GOOD AND EVIL CHOICE."]













BRUTE FORCE
Although the Iksar are primarily spellcasters, they'll also be able to engage in melee combat.

NICE OR NAUGHTY

After *Champions of Norrath* came out this past winter, the *OPM* editors immersed themselves in the game. For days, all conversations ended up coming back to the latest cool weapon that had been looted or which level we'd achieved the night before. When Snowblind Studios offered us an exclusive, no-holds-barred first look at the sequel, it was an easy decision to make.

Champions: Return to Arms opens on the Plane of Air, and you are again approached by Firiona Vie, who asks you to help her collect the nine shards of Innoruuk, the Prince of Hate, who was destroyed at the end of the last game. "This time around, however," says Todd Carson, associate producer from Sony Online Entertainment, "we're adding a good and evil choice." That choice presents itself in the voluptuous form of dark elf Natasla (who made an appearance at the end of *Champions of Norrath*). Natasla also wants you to help her collect the nine shards of Innoruuk, but her intentions are a bit more nefarious.

"Depending on which way you've chosen to play, you'll be able to use only one of the exits out of the first level," informs Carson. The doorway that you exit through will determine the path of the rest of the game. If you choose to be good, then Firiona will be your guide throughout the rest of the game; those who choose the dark side will be reporting to Natasla. While both the good and evil game paths take place in the same general locations, you won't always be moving through the same areas of the planes—some levels will be completely different. And both good and evil players will hear rumors from other characters, stories of a champion working for the other side.

You won't be able to switch sides after leaving the introductory level. However, after completing the game as a good character, you'll be able to start the game over at the next level and play again, this time as a bad character.

As you seek to fulfill your quest to find the nine shards of Innoruuk, you will need to leave the land of Norrath and go to different planes in the *EverQuest* world (see "The Setting" on page 78). One of the first obvious changes in the sequel has been to the game's structure. *Norrath* (and Snowblind's first RPG, *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance*) uses a series of acts to divide the different parts of the game world. In contrast, *Return to Arms* makes use of a hub structure. After successfully completing missions, you'll return to a central location to talk with either Firiona or Natasla to get your next assignment.

Another change that has been made to *Return to Arms* is the two additional levels of expertise, increasing the level cap from 50 to 80. And for all of those people who fell in love with their champions from *Norrath*, there is good news: You'll be able to import your characters from the first game into the sequel.

THE RACE IS ON

Players in *Return to Arms* will have the option of choosing to play as one of two completely new races, the Iksar or the Vah Shir. The lizardlike Iksar are shamans, which are primarily spellcasters, while the feline Vah Shir are berserkers, which focus more on melee combat.

Despite the popularity of other *EverQuest* races, like Frogloks, the decision to make the new playable characters the Vah Shir and Iksar was a fairly easy one. "To be honest, our artists thought they looked cool and wanted to make them," says Ryan Geithman, president of Snowblind Studios. "Although tiny characters have a lot of humor value to them, it's more fun to work on something that will end up being visually impressive—especially considering our primarily overhead camera angle, tiny characters just don't look as good." Unlike the other character classes, the Iksar and Vah Shir won't have male and female versions available, but both will have a variety of skins to choose from.

So what can you expect if you play as one of these new classes? While the Iksar shaman has some of the same skills (such as Bind Wound, Root, and Endurance) as fellow spellcasters the erudite wizard and the high elf cleric, he also gets his own unique skills. One new spell is called Summon Badger, which temporarily summons a spirit pet, hearkening back to the Iksar's origins in *EverQuest*, in which they could call familiars. And

CHAMPIONS OF NORRATH: REDUX
You battled your way through all the enemies of Norrath, ultimately dueling against Innoruuk, Prince of Hate, to save Firiona Vie and the land of Norrath. Upon Innoruuk's defeat, he shattered into nine shards of hatred, which are now scattered throughout the *EverQuest* universe.

THE WORLD OF EVERQUEST





So how much does the lore of *EverQuest* play into *Champions: Return to Arms*? "The *EverQuest* universe is pretty open...any creature or environment you can imagine will fit in somewhere," says Geithman. That said, the team isn't compelled to follow the exact history of the world when building the game. For example, the Vah Shir technically don't appear in Norrath until hundreds of years after the setting of *Return to Arms*. And in *EverQuest Online*, the Iksar are strictly a spellcasting class and not able to use weapons. As Carson explains, "We're using a lot of *EverQuest* lore, but we're not sticking strictly to it. We're not forcing the issue."



POLAR SCARE
Here, our hero the Vah Shir takes his wrath out on an old friend from the first game.



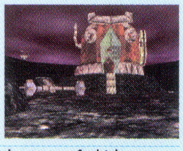
CATS VERSUS LIZARDS
Return to Arms introduces two new character classes: the spellcasting Iksar shaman and the melee Vah Shir berserkers. So which are the *OPM* editors most looking forward to trying? On the side of the Iksar are Joe and Chris; Chris argues, "Lizard people because they're reptiles. I'm already a mammal. Let me be something I'm not in a videogame!" John, Scooter, Dana, and Giancarlo all want to be Vah Shir. They weren't able to come up with any reasons more clever than "Because they're cat people," although Giancarlo did point out that "Tigers are responsible for the downfall of Siegfried and Roy. +1 Vah Shir."

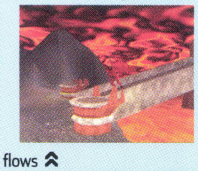


THE SETTING

In your quest to recover all nine of the shards of Innoruuk, you'll be forging your way across 11 of the planes of *EverQuest*, which are the astral homes of the gods. Below is a list of the different planes that you'll be seeing in the game.

Plane of Air	A collection of islands that float up in the air
Plane of Tranquility	A lone mountainous island surrounded by a serene sea
Plane of War	City ruins besieged by constant warfare
Plane of Innovation	Industrial wastelands littered with discarded technology »
Plane of Water	A great coral reef with two levels, the upper of which teems with nautical life and the lower of which is much darker and more sinister
Plane of Torment	A huge black cube bound together by the suffering of its inhabitants
Plane of Disease	A swamplike region made of diseased, rotten, putrid flesh
Plane of Valor	Beautiful rolling hills filled with fertile vegetation
Plane of Fire	A charred, smoky landscape dotted with volcanoes and lava flows »
Plane of Storms	A forest littered with lightning-struck trees
Plane of Nightmares	Dark, eerie woodlands that are home to all sorts of monsters





how can you not like a spell called Pus Storm, which causes large globs of pus to fall out of the sky and harm your enemies? Our favorite new spell, however, is Giant Growth, which temporarily grows your shaman to twice his size and allows him to do more damage.

If you choose the Vah Shir berserker, you'll be playing as a character whose skills are concentrated primarily in physical strength. Like the barbarian warrior, he'll be able to develop Cyclone, Dual Wield, and Critical Hit. One major difference between the two classes, however, is that the Vah Shir will have a third basic battle skill in addition to Blunt Weapons and Slashing Weapons: Throwing Weapons (see "Arm Yourself" on page 81). He'll also be able to summon axes, an active skill that instantly supplies a pile of axes for throwing at enemies. Another unique Vah Shir ability is Berserker Rage, a passive skill that provides a temporary buffer against your enemies once your health falls below 25 percent.

You don't have to choose a new character class to get new skills, though. Each of the five existing character classes is also getting three or four new spells. Clerics will now have Mark of Retribution, a spell that provides a health boost after successful enemy attacks. The wizard will be able to use Wave of Flame, which injures all monsters within a certain radius with fire. The shadow knight's Shadow Step instantly puts him in a safe place to protect against enemies; higher levels of this spell add smoke bombs and confusion to stun nearby opponents. The passive skill of Natural Resistance lowers the amount of damage that the barbarian warrior receives from magic attacks. And while the ranger still doesn't have unlimited ammunition, she'll now be able to put points toward both the Summon Arrows spell for speedy restocking and the Light Quiver skill to reduce arrow weight.

HEAD TO HEAD

Sometimes, it's not enough to slay random monsters—there are times when nothing will fulfill your blood lust quite like beating the tar out of the friend sitting right next to you—which is why one of the potentially coolest new elements in *Return to Arms* is the addition of player-versus-player combat. As part of its effort to expand the breadth of the game, Snowblind is letting you compete head-to-head against other players.

After completing a mission, you'll unlock a player-versus-player map based on that level's terrain; each new level will offer at least one new multiplayer map. The types of maps have yet to be finalized, but the team is working on a number of different ideas. "One is the standard mode of starting out in an arena with everyone about 20 yards apart," says Raoul Said, lead programmer from Snowblind. "We're also working on a map we're calling 'scramble,' which is kind of an *Unreal* model, where players start from different locations and you work your way to the middle, fighting off some monsters and trying to get to a chest in the middle." The team is also exploring the possibility of having team-versus-team combat as an option, but as of now, whether or not they'll be able to include it remains up in the air.

Another great new aspect of the game is the introduction of side quests, known as medal rounds. After completing a level, you'll have the chance to go back and play a minigame. Good performances are awarded with bronze, silver, or gold medals, which in turn unlock rewards for the player. "We wanted to create a medal and reward system to increase replay value," says Geithman. "It's also nice in the sense that players can get in and get out and feel like they've accomplished something without putting in a huge number of hours if they don't want to."

There will be a range of competition types: One game may have you trying to kill off as many enemies as possible before they can escape, and another could have you trying to protect a slew of catapults while enemies try to destroy them. Exact rewards have yet to be determined, but the team wants to offer a wide variety of prizes, ranging from unique gems to new player-versus-player maps to tokens that can be redeemed for weapons or armor at a storekeeper's shop.

LOG ON

In addition to all the gameplay expansion, you can expect updates to the online experience in

[YOU CAN COMPETE HEAD-TO-HEAD WITH OTHERS.]



BRING IT ON
You'll be able to play one-on-one against your friends. Here, our fierce barbarian warrioress holds her own against an Iksar opponent, who is using his Giant Growth ability.

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For complete skill trees for each of the classes in *Champions: Return to Arms*, visit www.1UP.com.

HE'S GONNA HURL
This time around, you won't just be fending off attacks from ninja stars—the Vah Shir have specific skills that can be developed for throwing weapons.





Return to Arms. "We want to expand the whole multiplayer experience. Last time around, people really enjoyed it, but we want to make it more full featured and able to stand on its own with other popular online titles," says Carson.

"Our goal is to make the online experience a lot more fun and easy to get into," adds Geithman. "The online matchmaking front end is being completely rewritten, and [it should] end up being far superior to the old one found in *Champions of Norrath*." The team also wants to incorporate the ability to text-chat with other players in the game, something you aren't able to do in the first game.

So what happens if you have a character who is on the good side and you want to join a game that has players who have chosen the bad side? While you'll be able to join them, for that online match, you'll be playing for whatever side the game's host is playing on. Games will be labeled with indicators telling whether they are good or evil games; if you haven't played through one side yet and don't want to see any spoilers, it will be easy for you to know which games are which.

Other changes to the game include updates to the overall look. This time around, you'll be seeing weather effects, something that wasn't present in *Norrath*. The team is also working on the speed and stability of the game. "We're trying to

ENEMIES

Expect a slew of new enemy types to go with all the new locations in the game. For the first time, you'll face off against ogres like the one to the left, and you'll have to enter into combat with the dragon behind him. You'll also battle your way through giant mosquitoes, Roman warriors, samurai, and doglike kobolds, just to name a few. Look for the special animations that accompany each enemy—for example, disgraced samurai will commit hara-kiri. Also expect boss fights to be tougher this time around—the team plans to give the bosses more long-range attacks, and some will also have minions to assist them as they try to finish you off.



LET IT SNOW
Return to Arms introduces new weather and lighting effects into the environments.





ARM YOURSELF

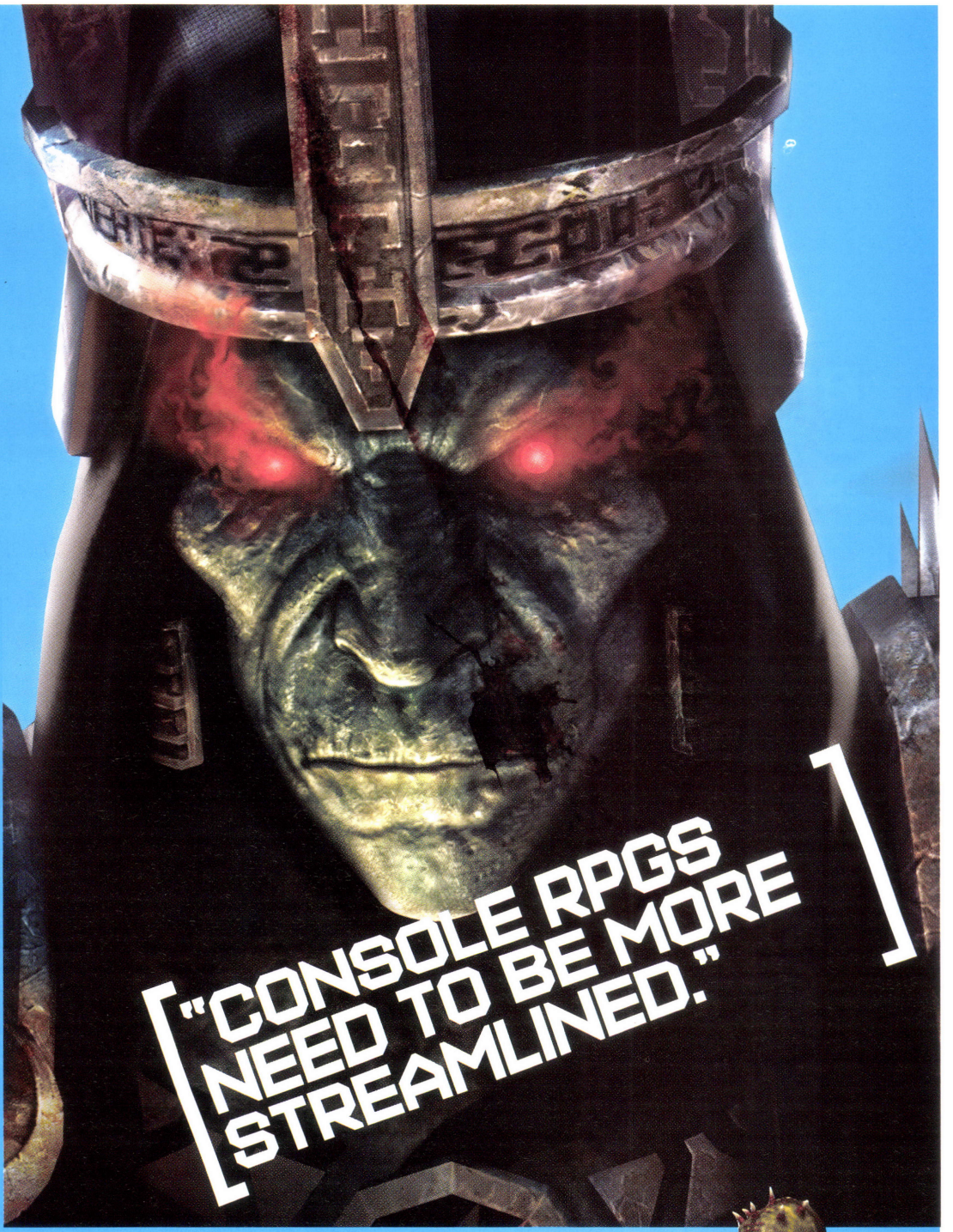
Return to Arms introduces a new class of weapons to the mix: throwing weapons. Hatchets, knives, and stars will now be available to all classes except clerics and wizards; however, Throwing Weapons is a skill that Vah Shir berserkers will be able to develop. Like spears and arrows, throwing weapons won't be an unlimited resource.



make sure that *Return to Arms* runs at a consistent 60 frames per second," says Geithman. "There were too many instances in *Champions of Norrath* where the framerate dropped to 30. This is unacceptable to us, and we are working hard to make sure this is much less of an issue in *Return to Arms*."

It's clear from all of the additions and modifications that are being made for this sequel that RPGs are starting to head in a new direction. "Higher production values are making [RPGs] cost even more money," says Geithman. "The visual differences between super-big-budget games and lower-budget ones will be even more evident. Plus, in the next round of consoles, having a strong online component for your RPG will be a requirement.

"I want to see console RPGs continue to get more and more streamlined," he continues. "There will always be room for all styles of RPG, but in my mind, games like *Ratchet & Clank: Going Commando* are a neat direction to go. I loved the very focused level design, where it's always clear what to do next in this game. This type of game is sort of the anti-*Morrowind*: simple, fun, and deep." It looks like *Champions: Return to Arms* is well on its way to reaching that goal. «



"CONSOLE RPGS NEED TO BE MORE STREAMLINED."



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For the full interview with Ryan Geithman, president of Snowblind Studios, visit www.1UP.com.

ARMOR

All-new armor will be available for every character class to collect—to the right is an example of the dark elf's fancy new attire. Each new suit of armor (helmet, breastplate, gloves, leggings, boots) is rendered in four different textures; each texture is then rendered in five different colors. In case math isn't your strong suit, that means each new suit that the team designs ultimately yields 100 different pieces of armor.

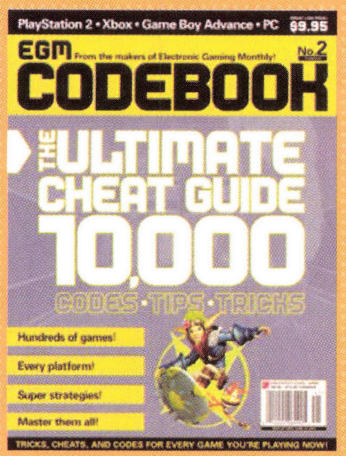


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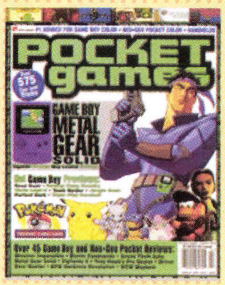
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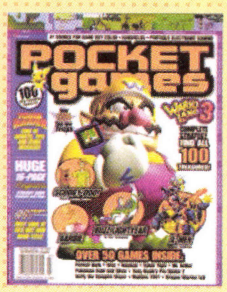
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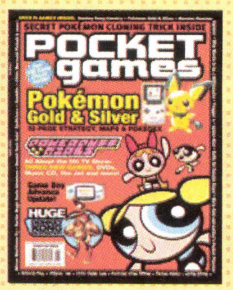
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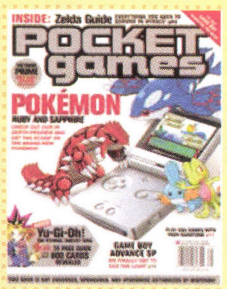
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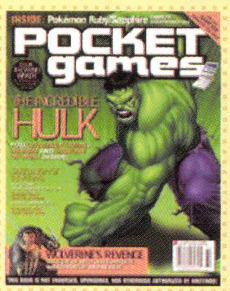
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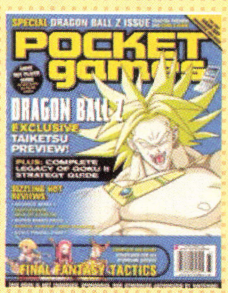
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RATING KEY
Octagons. Stomps. Ocs. Blargs. Call our rating symbols what you will—just know that any game that receives five of 'em is something truly special that deserves a spot in your collection. On the other hand, a 2.5 is merely mediocre. And a 0.5? Well...at least they're fun to rip apart.

[●●●●●]

SPLINTER CELL
PANDORA TOMORROW

OFFICIAL U.S. PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE
GAME OF THE MONTH

Surprises, surprises. That seems to be the theme for this month's batch of reviews. Is *Psi-Ops* the next big PS2 franchise? Who knew one of PS2's best tennis games is on its way? Where did *Bujingai* come from? And who the hell thought a Shrek game could be so much fun? Heck, we even review what's arguably the best videogame controller ever! But then there's something that comes as no surprise at all: *Pandora Tomorrow* rocks more than anything else. Play it now.


OFFICIAL U.S. PLAYSTATION MAGAZINE
GAME OF THE MONTH
EXCLUSIVE REVIEW
SPLINTER CELL
PANDORA TOMORROW
ARGUABLY THE BEST ONLINE GAME—EVER



The lighting, water, and foliage effects are simply staggering, beautifully showing off the jungle environments. You'd be hard pressed to find a better-looking game on PS2.

FIVE WAYS SPLINTER CELL IS BETTER THAN METAL GEAR

1. It has a totally sweet online mode.
2. The controls are damn-near perfect.
3. The story isn't too farfetched.
4. Dennis Haysbert (*24*) plays Lambert, your boss.
5. The lighting is bad-ayass.

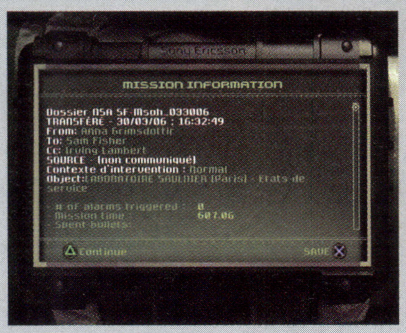


FIVE WAYS METAL GEAR IS BETTER THAN SPLINTER CELL

1. Snake is more likable than Sam.
2. The music is awesome.
3. It's a more cinematic experience.
4. Characters have easy-to-remember names.
5. It doesn't take itself as seriously.



THE SINGLE-PLAYER MODE IS A PERFECTLY ADEQUATE SEQUEL.





The detailed mission summary shows you exactly what you did right—and what you still need to work on—through the entire level. You'll get rated based on how well you managed to stay out of the light, how quiet you were, and how precise your shooting was.

THE X FACTOR

We can't pretend that *Pandora Tomorrow* hasn't already been out on Xbox for some considerable time. I'm not going to sit here and waffle on about how great the PS2 version is without providing a bit of perspective. There are differences between the two versions, and you need to be aware of them. Some of them are good, and some of them are bad, so let's not beat around the bush here.

On the good side, the PS2 version has some extra stuff. There's a new jungle mission, which is set in Indonesia and adds a little meat to the game's bones. The game also tracks performance on PS2 and provides a summary at the end of each mission. If you revisit completed missions, you get to try alternate paths and experience some altered gameplay parameters. Mission situation reports can be heard through the headset (for those of you who really like wearing it—personally, it makes me feel ridiculous), and Ubisoft is keen to point out that this is the "first game to use moving dynamic lighting technology for the PS2." What does that mean? The lights move.

On the downside, you're going to have to bite your lip and accept the fact that the Xbox version does look a bit better. Despite the fact that yes, it does move, the lighting on PS2 doesn't look as good, and some of the animation is a little lacking. Sam's mouth doesn't move when he talks, for example (big deal), but there's also stiffness to a lot of the movement, which you won't see in the Xbox version. Some of the missions are structured a little differently, too, so if you've played the Xbox version, you'll get confused when certain rooms and areas use a different layout.

You essentially get two completely separate games when you buy *Pandora Tomorrow*. First, there's the single-player mode, which is a perfectly adequate sequel to the original *Splinter Cell*. It sports only a handful of new missions, but unless you're some kind of super gaming ninja with the patience of a saint and the reflexes of a gazelle, it'll take you about 10 hours to blow through the whole thing. It's a particularly tough game, and the emphasis on stealth is more pronounced than in any other title in the genre. Often, you'll look back on a mission that took you more than an hour to get through and realize that the whole thing could've been over in a matter of minutes, had you known what to expect.

A good example of this happened to me in the second mission of the game (set in Paris). I had been popping off guards on the way to a cryogenics complex and had missed an all-important head shot. The alarm level had risen to stage two (there are only three stages before your boss, Lambert, pulls the plug on the mission), and I was faced with the need to get through the next few rooms completely undetected.

When I opened the first door, the alarm went off, and I had to go back to the checkpoint. Next time, I used the optic cable, waited for the guard behind the door to move, and then slipped in. But he turned around and saw me and triggered the damn alarm. Next, I switched off the light in the hallway outside the room (genius!), used the optic cable to wait for the guard, and then slipped into the room when he wasn't looking. As the guard walked away from me, I mercifully shot him with a sticky shocker, and he flopped to the floor, twitching and grunting. I walked past a couple of bookshelves...and the alarm went off for no apparent reason. Huh? Back to the checkpoint again, repeat everything, and this time, I shot out the lights. The room was now completely black, and as I crept slowly around, I noticed a camera moving back and forth on the wall at the end of the corridor. That's what had seen me! A single shot takes it out and I'm through—I'm feeling more than a little pleased with myself.

When done correctly, the entire process takes no more than a minute. With the trial and error to work out what's going on, it takes the better part of 20. It sounds frustrating, but complications like these really **force you to change the way you think** while playing *Pandora*.

Much like in the original *Splinter Cell*, your natural inclination throughout will be to take things just a little too fast, but as you get comfortable with the slower pace, **the tension builds exponentially**. Waiting for a guard to walk right past you while you crouch in the dark stops being boring and quickly becomes something that gets the adrenaline surging through your system. Being caught sucks, but getting through an entire level without being seen once becomes something that really drives you to play better.

The real cause for celebration isn't the single-player missions, though. On their own, they're good, and the game would score a solid four out of five if that's all

there was to this sequel. What's really going to push you over the edge is the multiplayer game—which may, for some of us at least, prove to be the best online game on PS2. Yes, it supports only four players (2-on-2 or any combination thereof), but any more would feel too crowded. *Pandora* is a genuinely innovative game—it does some new things that you won't have seen anywhere else, and it does them well.

However, there are some things you need to know about playing online. Aside from the fact that the spies and mercenaries require completely different gameplay skills, there are broader considerations. First, it's a hardcore gamer's game. Hard. Core. Capital

I COULD GO ON FOREVER AND EVER ABOUT COOL ASPECTS OF THE MULTIPLAYER GAME.

H, capital C. You need to invest some time in learning the different styles of play, as well as learning every last detail of the multiplayer maps. As a spy, you learn to slip around completely undetected, and as the mercs (whom you play FPS style—a bit like in *Rainbow Six 3*), you learn to set some pretty badass booby traps. If you stumble into a game as a rookie, you're going to get totally dismantled. Don't let this put you off.

Second, you're going to have to go out into the world and make some friends. The absolute best possible *Pandora* experience is when four people who know each other hook up and take turns playing as spies and mercs. It is a spectacularly rewarding experience and unnervingly addictive. You *have* to communicate, and you *have* to understand the tools that the game provides you with. This isn't like *SOCOM*, in which you can jump in, pop off a few rounds, and feel like you achieved something without getting to know the game's intricacies. Some of you may find this a bit intimidating, but don't let it scare you off.

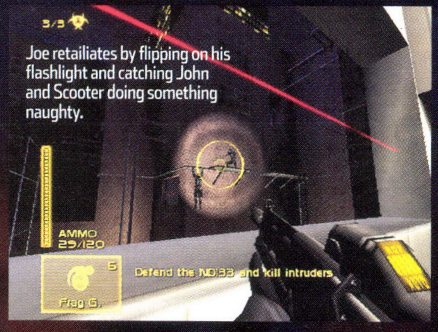
I could go on forever and ever about cool aspects of the multiplayer game—how it gets under your skin to the point that you start thinking about things in real life in game terms—but you need to play it for yourself to believe what I'm talking about. This is definitely a game that we'll be coming back to again and again, and you can expect a lot of coverage in our Replay pages in the coming months. « *John Davison*

MULTIPLAYER MAYHEM

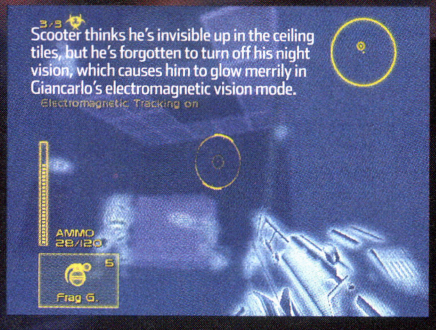
Four players may not seem like a lot, but the online play wouldn't work as well with any more. This mode oozes tension, and you'll find yourself sweating in no time—even if your character isn't moving a muscle. That's not to say there's no comic relief, though.



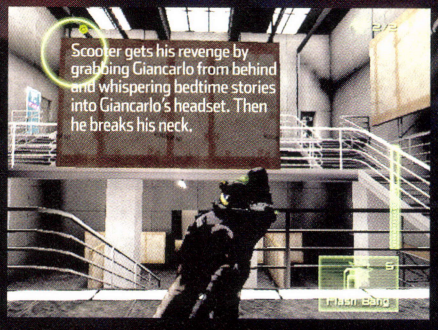
John, whose stylish dark clothing blends in nicely with his surroundings, hides in plain sight as Joe walks by, oblivious.



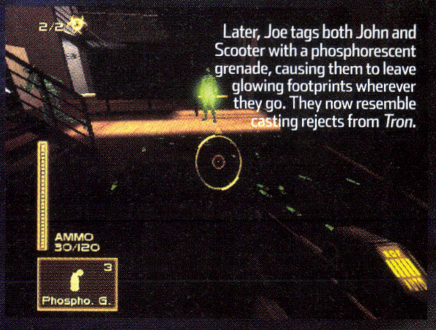
Joe retailiates by flipping on his flashlight and catching John and Scooter doing something naughty.



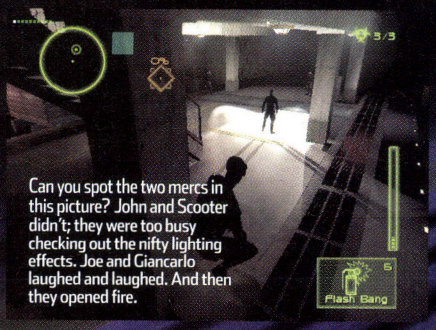
Scooter thinks he's invisible up in the ceiling tiles, but he's forgotten to turn off his night vision, which causes him to glow merrily in Giancarlo's electromagnetic vision mode.



Scooter gets his revenge by grabbing Giancarlo from behind and whispering bedtime stories into Giancarlo's headset. Then he breaks his neck.



Later, Joe tags both John and Scooter with a phosphorescent grenade, causing them to leave glowing footprints wherever they go. They now resemble casting rejects from *Tron*.



Can you spot the two mercs in this picture? John and Scooter didn't; they were too busy checking out the nifty lighting effects. Joe and Giancarlo laughed and laughed. And then they opened fire.

PlayStation MAGAZINE RATING

IF WE SCORED IT AS TWO COMPLETELY DIFFERENT GAMES

Single Player: ●●●●○

Online: ●●●●●

Pub. Ubisoft **Dev.** Ubisoft **ESRB** Teen **MSRP** $49.99

[●●●●●]



BOOBY TRAPS
Exclusive to the PS2 version of the game is a mechanic for dismantling booby traps (left).

MR. PANDORA ONLINE
One of the things about innovative game design is that it often goes unnoticed. *Beyond Good & Evil* had innovation oozing out of every pore, and yet no one really paid all that much attention last holiday season. The problem, it seems, is that innovative gameplay in a brand-new franchise just doesn't work. The key is to bust out the good stuff in something that we're all comfortable with already. *Pandora* is going to affect the types of online modes we see in games in the future, and for that, we have to thank Creative Director Gunther Galipot, whom we singled out in our "PlayStation People" list in Issue 80.



WAY OF THE SAMURAI 2

SECOND VERSE, SAME AS FIRST

2002's *Way of the Samurai* offered gamers a choose-your-own-adventure path with sword fighting, but its repetitiveness kept it from being great. Does *Way of the Samurai 2* remedy the boredom?

You are a lone samurai in the town of Amahara, where multiple factions struggle for control. Over the course of 10 days, the game presents you with choices that affect the final outcome. Will you ally yourself with the townspeople, the magistrate's office, or the Aoto gang? Depending on your decisions, the game can take anywhere from a half-hour to eight hours to complete.

Duplicated from the last game, the fighting system remains very simple: The more you fight, the more moves become available to you, and different swords offer different advantages for attacks and defenses. Duels are fairly simple—even in multiopponent battles, your enemies take turns, never attacking simultaneously. Being able to collect swords and upgrade them at the blacksmith's shop adds a nice element of strategy to it all.

The game's concept is good, but the gameplay often comes interspersed with long periods of waiting—a major downfall. Since the game is intended to be played through multiple times to get the complete story, you inevitably have to sit through the same cut-scenes over and over. You'll also find yourself killing time while waiting for the next scripted event. To speed up the game, I often sent my samurai home and put him to sleep—better him than me.

Essentially, *Way of the Samurai 2* is the same game as the original, and the minor differences between them are mostly negative—the sequel offers blander environments and eliminates the two-player battle mode. If you liked the first *Way of the Samurai*, then this provides more of the same type of play. But don't expect anything new or exciting. « *Dana Jongewaard*

PlayStation RATING

REVIEW HAIKU
Oh lone samurai,
Your path is rather tiresome.
Rock yourself to sleep.

Pub. Capcom **Dev.** Capcom **ESRB** Mature **MSRP** $39.99

[●●●●●]

CHECK 'EM OUT!

THEY'RE BOTH ON THE DISC

Be sure to take a look at cool videos for both *Way of the Samurai 2* and *Bujingai* in motion on this month's demo disc.

BUJINGAI: THE FORSAKEN CITY

A LITTLE BIT MORE THAN "THE GACKT GAME"



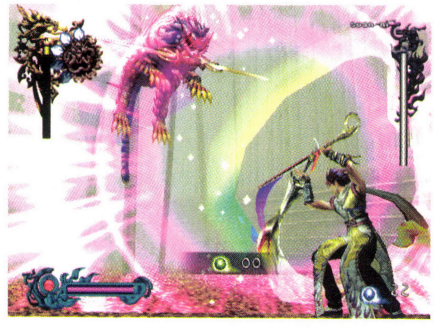
Just prior to writing this review, I checked out Andrew Vestal's amusing column about Gackt (see pg. 68), the Japanese pop star digitally featured in *Bujingai: The Forsaken City* (whose name sounds like an onomatopoeia expressing repulsion). Weird dude. But you know what? Like most of you, if I'm going to take an interest in a freaky androgynous musician, I'll stick with David Bowie. Aside from inspiring thoughts like "My character should be named Sissy Boy, not Lau," Gackt's presence in no way affects your experience with *Bujingai*. This isn't "the Gackt game"—it's just a really cool action title inspired by *Devil May Cry*.

Speaking of Capcom's masterpiece, *Bujingai* features one-on-one sword fighting that hasn't felt this good since Dante's duels with Nelo Angelo in 2001. You really are just mashing buttons here, but the game's smooth play, simple counter system, and presentation—bright colors *everywhere*—combine for pure frenetic exhilaration you might have a hard time putting down.

Even beyond the pretty colors, *Bujingai* oozes with style. Sissy Boy knows only a handful of actual combos for his two-sword, wushu-based attacks, but magic, wall walking, and gliding through the air—all inspired by Hong Kong action flicks such as *Once Upon a Time in China* and *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*—definitely help pick up the slack.

The enemies in *Bujingai* also feel very *DMC* (that's a good thing), but only the awesome bosses—and the challenging boss fights attached—really stand out. At times, you'll wish a "boss fight only" mode existed.

But as cool as the sword fights and boss battles may be, *Bujingai* may frustrate you for hours at a time with poorly designed levels that depend too much on jumping puzzles. The game also suffers graphically at almost any time that Sissy Boy isn't actually fighting—everything just looks so plain. Times like these make you just wanna call it...well..."the *gackt* game." Fortunately, they're ultimately about as relevant as Gackt's very appearance itself. « *Chris Baker*





HAPPY 50TH, TAITO!

In Japan, longtime videogame publisher Taito distributed *Bujingai* and also made a big deal about it being the company's 50th game. Gamers owe a lot to Taito, of course, as it helped usher in gaming's popularity when *Space Invaders* hit arcades in 1978.

PlayStation RATING

PROS Some of the best sword fighting ever, cool boss fights, lots of pretty colors
CONS Annoying jumping puzzles, bland background graphics
WHO CARES ABOUT...? Gackt

Pub. Bam **Dev.** Red Entertainment **ESRB** Teen **MSRP** $39.99

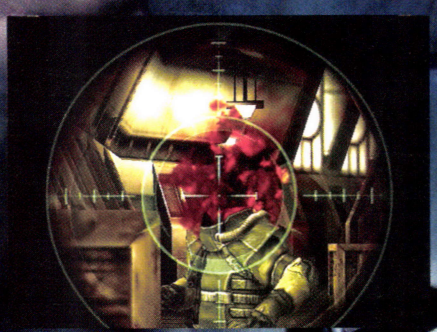
[●●●●●]

EXCLUSIVE REVIEW

PSI-OPS

THE MINDGATE CONSPIRACY

MIND OVER MATTER





NOT FOR KIDS
Above lies a good example of what happens when a head explodes in *Psi-Ops*—which happens a lot.



If you could have any superpower, what would it be? Would you want to see through walls? Throw things around with your mind? Switch bodies at will? Or would you want something a little more sinister—like the ability to set things on fire or to make people's heads spontaneously explode?

You know you've thought about it. We all have. Well, chief, now's your chance. *Psi-Ops: The Mindgate Conspiracy* puts all these powers at your disposal, and the results are extraordinarily satisfying.

You play as Nick Scryer, an agent in a top-secret psychic program in the U.S. military. Scryer's memory has been wiped so that he can infiltrate the base of a powerful psychic organization called The Movement, but the wipe—which was supposed to be only temporary—has worked a little too well. Now you need to figure out what The Movement is after, how to stop it, who exactly you are, and just how much psychic power you have at your disposal. (Hint: It's a *lot*.)

This means the game begins as a fairly standard (if unusually crisp-looking) third-person shooter. But it's not long at all before you "reawaken" your first psychic power: telekinesis. **Soon, you're throwing around boxes, benches, and bad guys with hardly a second thought.**

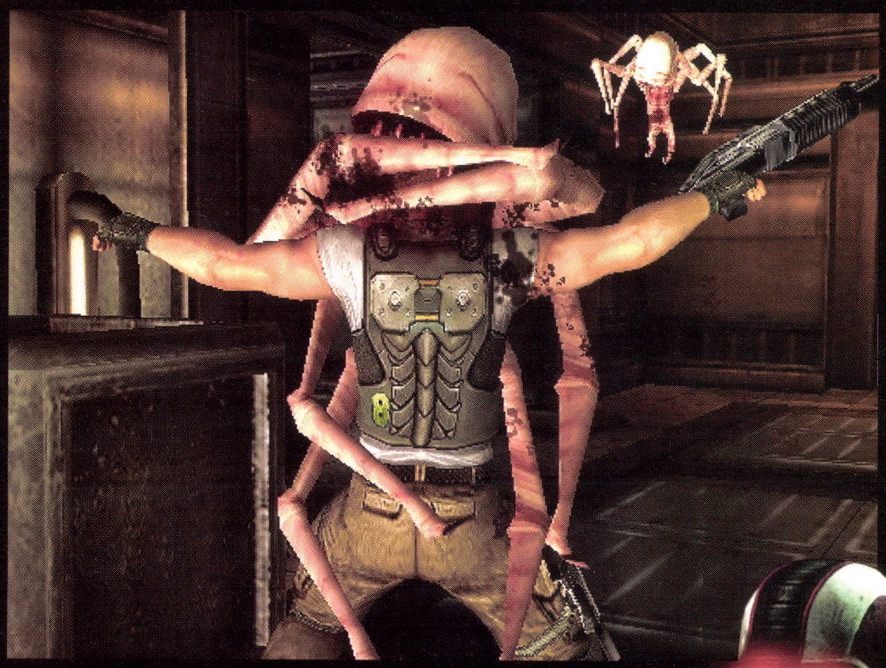
This is the basic structure of the game: You "remember" a new ability via a training flashback, you go crazy using it, you kick the crap out of some poor shlubs and their mustache-twirling boss, you finish a level, and the process starts again. What this (admittedly glib) summary doesn't get across is just how damn good it all feels.

By making all of Nick's crazy psi powers directly accessible from the control pad (that is, no messy menu screens to break up the action), *Psi-Ops* draws you in quickly and surely. I hope you played around with the demo last month, because you'll know what I'm talking about here.

One section that really highlights the excellent implementation of your powers comes about halfway through the game. You've just planted three bombs to demolish a Movement base, and you need to get the hell out of there fast. While a timer counts down, you race through the halls on your way to a landing pad. Of course, the game takes this opportunity to throw hordes of enemies at you, more enemies than you can take the time to deal with properly. The solution: Grab and toss anything or anyone in your way. Eventually, the building starts to crumble, and big pieces of masonry start falling dangerously near you, some blocking your path. If you're quick enough on the draw with your telekinesis, you can actually catch these blocks in the air and hurl them out of the way before they become a bother.

The feeling of power when doing something like this—tossing enemies around like so many rag dolls or plucking an oncoming grenade out of midair and hurling it back at your enemies—is just spectacular. **No superhero game I've ever played made me feel more like, well, a superhero.**

It should be noted, though, that the game can get pretty gruesome: Exploding heads, enthusiastically juiced bodies, and









HOW CONVENIENT
The guy to the left can only be hurt by fire. You meet him right after you relearn your pyrokinesis ability.

MINIGAMES GALORE!

Psi-Ops busts out a veritable pantsload of extra material as you play through the game. There's a fast-paced arcade mode; a couple different boss-fighting modes; a "dark mode" that makes the game, um, darker; and a seriously disappointing co-op mode that puts one player in control of Nick's psychic abilities while the other moves and shoots. By far the best bonus mode, though, is the collection of extra missions that are opened up by collecting hidden evil gnomes on each level. Here's the breakdown:

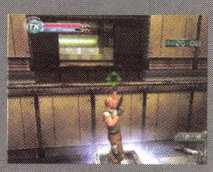
I CANNOT WAIT TO SEE WHAT THE NEXT GAME MIGHT BRING.



PITFALL
Swing from crate to crate without touching the ground.



PANIC ROOM
Blow up the right barrels to get out of a locked room.



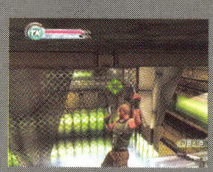
UP & OVER
Use your telekinesis to get over a series of high walls.



STOPLIGHTS
Use your aura view to hit the right switch at the right time.



GASOLINE
Use your pyrokinesis to set a roomful of enemies aflame.



BOTTOMLESS PIT
Use telekinesis to "surf" through a maze of obstacles.



TK ALLEY
Bowling. Specifically, telekinetic bowling.



TK PUZZLE
More or less a life-sized version of *Mouse Trap*.



TIP THE IDOL
Use telekinesis to knock over a huge, Buddha-like statue.



PSI POOL
Use psi and exploding barrels to sink giant billiard balls.



AURA POOL
Like Psi Pool, except the balls are only visible in aura view.



BOUNCY, BOUNCY
Retrieve a gnome from a room full of huge, bouncing balls.



GNOMOTRON
Endless waves of exploding, electrically charged gnomes.



SURVIVAL MODE
Endless waves of rotting zombies in a graveyard.

the occasional rotting carcass make *Psi-Ops* most definitely *not* Saturday-morning fare.

Now, I don't want to go on a techno-geek rant here, but **it really is the physics engine that makes this all possible.** When barrels roll, boxes smash, and bodies flop convincingly, it makes both the feeling of immersion and the feeling of power that much more present. There were plenty of moments in the game when I thought, *I wonder if I can break that? I wonder if I can knock that down? I wonder if I can pick that up?* The answer more often than not was "Oh, hell yeah!" That's great game design.

Which is why I was so very disappointed by the story, and more specifically, the dialogue. While there aren't any hall-of-shame–worthy "master of unlocking" lines, **the writing is definitely sub–B-movie quality.** Cliché characters and situations are the norm here rather than the exception, with some truly standout examples of awfulness. The story moves from standard government-conspiracy fare to bizarre paranormal elements, with no really believable thread holding the whole thing together. How unfortunate. With a solid story, *Psi-Ops* could easily have been one of the best games, well, *ever;* instead, the resoundingly mediocre story and writing give this otherwise superlative game a vicious kick in the junk. A staggeringly unsatisfying ending just adds insult to the crushing injury.

The overall plotting issues extend into gameplay, too: Every time you "remember" a new ability, you are virtually guaranteed to be immediately faced with a brand-new situation that can only be overcome through the use of this new ability. This would have been fine if you could go back to earlier areas of the game—or even play again—and find new gameplay through the use of your new abilities, but this isn't the case. The result is that it all feels very artificial, which works against those fantastic feelings of power and immersion.

It's a testament to the excellence of the fundamental gameplay that I still had a blast with the game in spite of these major issues. In fact, it's all I can do to keep from playing it *right now.* This is in large part due to the staggering collection of bonus materials that open up over the course of the game, from new playable characters to behind-the-scenes featurettes (check out the cool minigames in the far-left sidebar).

Midway is obviously positioning *Psi-Ops* as a new franchise, and I, for one, cannot wait to see what the next game might bring. If the designers can take the solid groundwork they've laid here and build a memorable story on it, the game will be all but unstoppable. « *Joe Rybicki*

THE WORST OF THE WORST

Don't believe *Psi-Ops'* dialogue could really be *that* bad? See for yourself:

The General: "Welcome to The Movement, gentlemen. I am the General."
Wei Lu: "Perhaps, like your memory, your senses cannot be trusted as well."
The General: "Nick Scryer. I should have killed you when I first saw you. The best agent I ever trained returns to me as my enemy." [*Exits.*]
The General: "All that we've worked for will be thrown away like garbage."
Wei Lu: "You have the power...the power to stop the General. That is why you are—" [*Dies.*]
Marlena: "I'll bring home *your* bacon!"
Sara: "Mom always did like me best. Bitch."

Official U.S. PlayStation Magazine RATING

PROS Throw people through windows, off buildings, and into unmovable walls!
CONS You'll cringe at the cringeworthy writing and wish you had those brain cells back
BEST PSI POWER Telekinesis, hands down
Pub. Midway **Dev.** Midway **ESRB** Mature **MSRP** $49.99

SOUND STATION

COLD HELPS CHILL DOWN PSI-OPS



In *Psi-Ops: The Mindgate Conspiracy,* your brain is so powerful that it can move objects, hurt bad guys, and make people do your bidding. But it didn't take any Force-like powers to get the band Cold to record an original song for the game. According to singer Scooter Ward, it only took a little footage and a little story.

OPM We're guessing from the name of the song, "With My Mind," that you guys wrote it specifically for this game.

SCOOTER WARD Sort of. We actually had this riff we were working on, and when Midway sent us a trailer for the game, this little 30-second clip, and told us what the game was about, the lyrics came pretty quickly, and the lyrics just fit that riff really well.

OPM Had you ever written a song for a game before?

SW No, we've never done anything like this, which is why we were stoked to try it. We write songs almost every day, so it was cool to write a song for something other than Cold. Though it is actually just another Cold song. In fact, one of the reasons we did this was because when we read the story line, we realized that it was the kind of stuff we write about anyway.

OPM Are there any plans to include the song on your next album?

SW We're actually going on tour first—we're going out with Sevendust—but when we're done with that, we're going to make a new album, so it might be on there. Though we already shot a video for the song. We shot it last year, and it's going to be included on the game.

OPM Have you had a chance to play *Psi-Ops* yet?

SW We played a rough of it when we played at the E3 convention last year in Los Angeles, but even for a rough version, it was still pretty cool.

OPM What would you guys have done if, when you played the game, you'd realized that it sucked?

SW You know, just from the trailer I could tell it was going to be badass. We play all those kinds of games—*Metal Gear Solid, Rainbow Six*—so we knew just from the trailer that it was going to be the kind of game we like to play.

"YOU KNOW, JUST FROM THE TRAILER I COULD TELL IT WAS GOING TO BE BADASS."

OPM Who in the band is the biggest gamer?

SW Me, Kelly [Hayes, guitarist], and Jeremy [Marshall, bassist] play pretty much every day, especially when we're touring. That's what you do when you're on a bus—you get bored sitting around, so we just spend the time playing games. And sometimes our buddies from other bands will come on our bus and play, too.

OPM Are there any you play together?

SW We do sometimes have *Madden* competitions, but I suck at sports games. I don't know what it is, I just suck at them.

OPM So do you think people ever underestimate your skills as a gamer because your name is Scooter?

SW Ha! Man, I don't know, but if they do, bring it on!

<< *Paul Semel*

FRONT MISSION 4

CASUAL STRATEGY FANS NEED NOT APPLY

In 92 years, wanzer mechs are everywhere. Your great-grandkids, each having names like Hermes and Zead, will all pilot their own, either to cause arbitrary mass destruction or to heroically defend their countrymen from such jerks.

If you've never played a *Front Mission* before, don't worry—that's really all the setup you need going into *Front Mission 4*. Meanwhile, series veterans are in for exactly what they'd expect from the series' PS2 debut: a significantly better-looking, superlong quality turn-based strategy that features a few minor gameplay tweaks.

Outside of Koei's *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* series, **nothing surpasses the complexity of *FM4***. If sorting through dull management screens for 20 or 30 minutes as you strategize between each battle isn't your idea of fun, then this is by no means the game for you. Equipping your wanzers appropriately is absolutely vital to progressing through this *huge* game, and you simply won't get very far by half-assing your way through the prebattle portions.

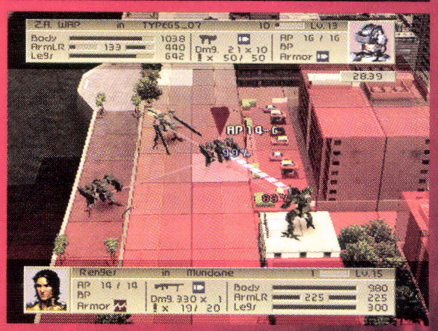
The gameplay adheres to most turn-based-strategy conventions, but the whole wanzer element adds quite a bit of character in itself. To destroy a wanzer completely is to obliterate its body portion, but beforehand, you might also blast off its arms to make it lose weapons capability or its legs to slow down its movement (you usually cannot aim wherever you please, though, which sometimes downright sucks). Each wanzer holds a limited number of ability points (AP), which determine how much it can move, attack, counterattack, or perform other abilities throughout one turn.

A lot of AP is consumed through *FM4*'s new link system. Obviously inspired by *Dynasty Tactics*, yet still unique enough to be its own feature, it allows allied wanzers to team up against enemies during a single character's turn, potentially allowing for multiple attacks by one unit within an army's full turn. Sound complicated? It is, and it involves quite the learning curve.

In terms of presentation, *FM4* blows away other games in its genre. This is no beautiful game, but it *is* a very nice-looking one—something that can't be said for similar PS2 titles. But can't Squenix devise a better progression method for its engaging, well-translated story than tiny heads in the bottom-left corner of the screen? **Will this genre ever figure out that game storytelling and cut-scenes have actually evolved since 1994?**

Ultimately, that's a minor quibble. There's plenty of strategic gameplay to be had here for thinking gamers out there... patient ones, anyway. « *Chris Baker*





THE REAL WORLD

One of *Front Mission 4*'s more unusual yet welcome qualities is the fact that it actually takes place on Earth. The game begins in Germany, where we meet one of the two main characters, Elsa, who eventually finds herself going all across Europe with a small group of allies as they unravel a conspiracy. The screen below represents Venezuela, where Darril and pals find themselves as unwitting participants in overthrowing a new dictatorship. Can the two stories be connected? (You bet!)



PlayStation RATING

PROS Best-looking turn-based tactical-strategy game ever, good story, well translated, lots of thinking in the tougher stages
CONS Could still look better, 16-bit-style storytelling, some levels too straightforward
Pub. Square Enix **Dev.** Square Enix **ESRB** Teen **MSRP** $49.99



SHREK 2

FINALLY, SHREK DOESN'T SUCK

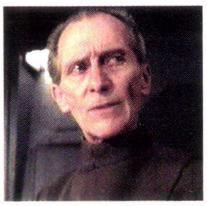




By now, you may have seen *Shrek 2* sitting on a store shelf, hopelessly yelling, "Pick me! Pick me!" in a Donkey-like manner. And given the dubious precedent set by previous *Shrek* games, who can blame you for passing it by? But take note: If you have even the slightest love for a warped look at the fairy tales we all grew up with (all based around the new film, of course), you won't want to miss *Shrek 2*. Sure, it has its problems, but you pretty much have to have the heart of an ogre—a really *mean* one—to not have fun with this game.

Think of *Shrek 2* as a sort of funny, cuter *Gauntlet*. You'll almost always see four characters onscreen, and you can switch between all of them on the fly. Your place in the story mandates which of the nine characters joins you, and all come with their own special attributes (not to mention a special character-specific level known as "hero time"). Brawler Shrek lifts heavy objects, for example, while Gingerbread Man throws a mean candy cane, nimble Puss-in-Boots balances himself across a tightrope, and the Big Bad Wolf huffs and puffs and blows Fairy Godmother's malevolent forces in. A true sense of teamwork accompanies *Shrek 2*'s laudable gameplay variety, and two to four players only add to the fun.

Unfortunately, multiplayer also causes a wacky camera at times, which results in quite a few cheap deaths and other frustrations. You can also beat the game in one long evening if you try—which, to the game's credit (and unlike many other six-hour games), you might just want to do. « *Chris Baker*



VAN HELSINGS!
Hugh Jackman is only the latest foreigner to put "Van Helsing" on his résumé. Previously, Sir Anthony Hopkins played the good doctor (*Dracula*, 1992), and so did Sir Laurence Olivier (*Dracula*, 1979). Though, the one actor most identified as Van Helsing is, in actuality, Peter "Grand Moff Tarkin" Cushing, who played him in six films! Then again, Jackman can claim that he's the first *Gabriel* Van Helsing.



VAN HELSING

THE CLOSEST YOU'LL GET TO DANTE VERSUS DRACULA

Bram Stoker originally introduced Dr. Abraham Van Helsing, M.D., Ph.D., D. Lit, etc., etc. as "a philosopher and a metaphysician, and one of the most advanced scientists of his day"—a far cry from the dual-pistol-wielding monster hunter who jumps, shoots, and slices his way through Universal Pictures' troupe of monsters in both movie and game form.

Gamewise, *Van Helsing* is surprisingly solid. The recipe seems to be as follows: borrow *Devil May Cry*'s basic structure, add a protagonist who resembles Blade, and stir in a dash of Wolverine for good measure. Van Helsing easily pulls off combos, switches between firearms and blades, and swings from precipice to precipice thanks to smooth controls. The different weapons and their varied alternate attacks are balanced well against corresponding enemies—fleshy monsters hate crossbows, exploding bullets hurt rock monsters the most, and the grapple pulls a flier toward you effectively.

Van Helsing is tasked with killing plenty of monsters, such as Frankenstein's monster, the Wolfman, Mr. Hyde, and Dracula's brides, to name a few. That's even more than the collection found in the last multi-monster Universal picture, *Abbott & Costello Meet Frankenstein* (but still not quite as many as in the 1987 cult classic *The Monster Squad*). The overall enemy design works satisfactorily, except for the overpowered dwergers (apparently, that's Goth for "dwarf"), whose size makes them harder to hit.

Awkward camera angles and repetitive bosses plague *Van Helsing* more than any vampirism. Quite a few times, you simply can't see where you're going or whom you're fighting. Also, even though you fight cool big-name monsters, it's still annoying to have to take them on multiple times—whether that's a constraint of the movie, I don't know, but I don't need to fight the Wolfman twice.

For a game based on a movie license that shamelessly samples from literature, *Van Helsing* is surprisingly inoffensive and actually decent. If you don't have lofty expectations and just want some interactive B-movie thrills, this game certainly fits the bill. « *Thierry Nguyen*





JACK IT!
It's weird to see Wolverine/Van Helsing as a dandy in such movies as *Kate & Leopold* and *Someone Like You*...and on Broadway. It gives us mixed feelings, truth be told.

PlayStation MAGAZINE RATING

REVIEW LIMERICK
There once was an ogre named Shrek, / And all of his games were pure dreck. / But along came *Shrek 2*. / And you know what to do? / Just give it a try—what the heck?

Pub. Activision **Dev.** Luxoflux **ESRB** Everyone **MSRP** $49.99

[●●●●●●]

PlayStation MAGAZINE RATING

PRESCRIPTION Expect straightforward action with decent graphics and smooth controls. If easily irritated by repetitive boss encounters and irregular camera behavior, stop playing immediately.

Pub. Vivendi Universal **Dev.** Saffire **ESRB** Teen **MSRP** $49.99

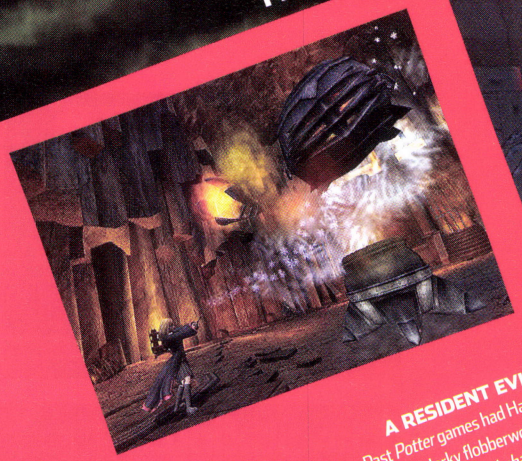
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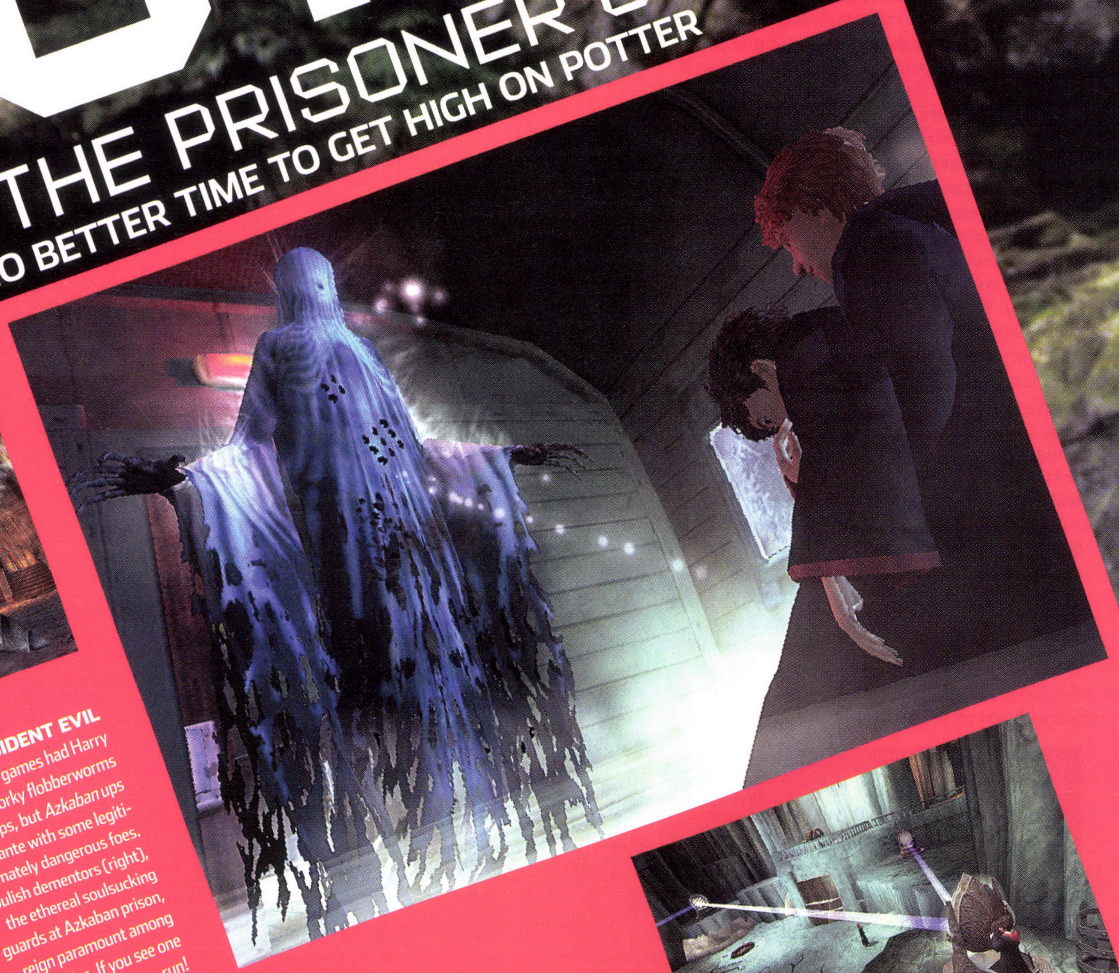


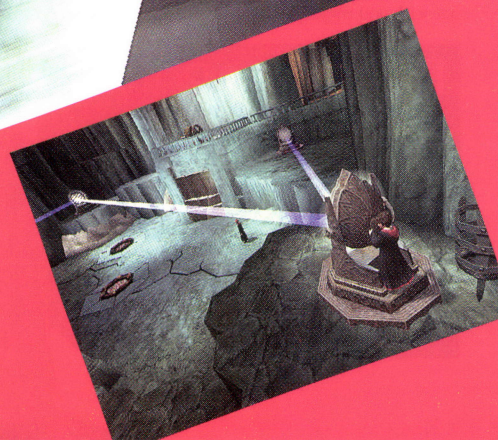
HARRY POTTER

AND THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN

THERE'S NO BETTER TIME TO GET HIGH ON POTTER







A RESIDENT EVIL

Past *Potter* games had Harry fighting dorky flobberworms and imps, but *Azkaban* ups the ante with some legitimately dangerous foes. Ghoulish dementors (right), the ethereal soulsucking guards at Azkaban prison, reign paramount among these enemies. If you see one early in the game...run!

Finally...Harry Potter starts to grow up. As any not-embarrassed-to-be-reading-kids'-books adult will tell you, *Prisoner of Azkaban* represents a crucial tonal shift for JK Rowling's wildly popular tale. Harry's third year is far bleaker and more harrowing than the previous two (and it only gets creepier from here). Sure, your little brother will still be able to enjoy Harry's time at Hogwarts, but older readers/viewers can finally feel that they're not slumming in Kiddieland by enjoying the boy wizard's quest.

So, it's fitting that EA's third *Potter* game **offers a deeper, more mature experience** than the previous titles. It's fundamentally still a *Zelda*-inspired adventure: Exploration, combat, and magic all unfold just as they do in the landmark *Ocarina of Time* for N64. The developers take some interesting risks this time, though—you now control not only Harry, but also Ron and Hermione. Each whiz kid specializes in something: Harry leaps across chasms and shoots a grappling-hook spell, Ron spots secret passages, and Hermione squeezes through tight openings.

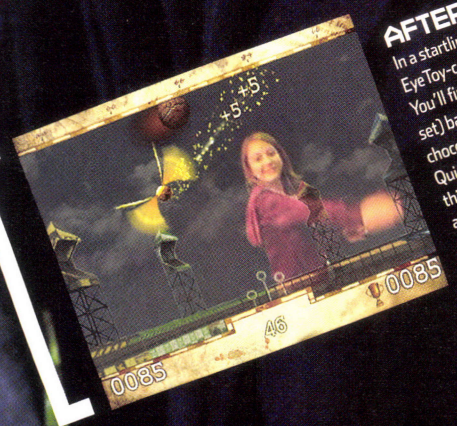
Switching among three characters on the fly galvanizes the gameplay, making combat and puzzles far more challenging. For example, Hermione will have to freeze fiery salamanders with her Glacius spell before Harry and Ron can double-team them with Flipendo blasts, or Harry may have to jump across moving platforms while the other two take out annoying pixies. The previous *Potter* titles were *easy*, but this time around, bosses actually pose a threat—you'll have to strategize and use each kid's spells to succeed.

The game's basic structure—seven days of set classes that thinly disguise dungeons and battles—can feel limiting, as your party members constantly whine about being late for class or wanting to go to bed. Disregard their incessant complaints and take time to explore the vast expanse of Hogwarts. You'll find tons of optional goodies stowed away in the castle's corridors (you can collect cards, beans, pages, and other assorted doodads), and the surrounding grounds hide a wealth of neat secrets, like optional two-player minigames.

EA generally excels at imbuing its games with slick production values, and *Azkaban* doesn't disappoint. **Visually, this newest installment handily outclasses its predecessors** with richly detailed environments and nifty effects. Similarly, the audio takes cues from the film's eerie score, and the soundalike actors perform admirably. One weird stumbling block *Azkaban* hits is its narrative. EA just assumes everyone has read the book or seen the film—players get zero backstory and little context for the game's events, so be sure you're prepared before tackling this adventure. « *Shane Bettenhausen*

AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

In a startling display of kindness, EA has packed some EyeToy-compatible minigames into *Azkaban*...for free! You'll find six wacky diversions (all available from the outset) based on goofy *Potter*-themed activities like swatting chocolate frogs, matching wizard cards, and catching the Quidditch Golden Snitch. Like all EyeToy games, these things get pretty dull after a while (unless you're inebriated or under age 8), but hey, they're free. Other companies would charge $40 for this stuff.



OFFICIAL U.S. PlayStation MAGAZINE RATING

PROS Deeper combat and trickier puzzles than past *Potter* outings, free EyeToy games
CONS Feels a bit short, long loading times, sparse story line

Pub. EA Games **Dev.** EA UK **ESRB** Everyone **MSRP** $49.99



RIBBIT KING

HARDCORE FROLF ACTION

Not since Tinky Winky has a children's character's alternative lifestyle been so blindingly obvious as the Referee's in *Ribbit King*. His stereotypical lisp and sashaying of the hips are made all the more surreal by the fact that he's essentially a giant black amphibian who presides over each match of frolf, a zesty fusion of frogs and golf.

During a tournament that spans five planets, you—as Scooter(!)—play against a wide variety of frolfers, beings who specialize in launching frogs from catapults over courses littered with obstacles. There are plentiful surreal moments, such as when a panda momentarily turns *Ribbit King* into a fighting game or when you find yourself frolfing against an irate gumball machine.

In single player, however, the surrealness pairs itself with infuriation—mostly due to an A.I. opponent blessed with utterly amazing accuracy. With the easier opponents, this translates into an amusing display of stupid yet amazing frolf shots—but when you play against the better opponents who never miss, you then realize that they're simply cheating. Combine the cheating with the horrible camera and annoying framerate, and the single player serves as a 10-minute distraction at best.

When you play frolf with a noncheating friend, though, it actually becomes both amusing and engaging. It's easy to pick up, and the scoring system, frog variety, and power-ups actually call for tactical usage. Even if a player manages to score a frog-in, the other player can make up the difference with sly use of power-ups and point bonuses. The fairness and fun of playing against another person usually make up for the aforementioned issues.

While *Ribbit King* is no *Hot Shots Golf*, it still manages to offer a perfectly fun, surreal distraction—but only when playing with live frolfers. If you go at it alone, even the Frolf Referee's entertaining mannerisms won't make up for the frustration caused by the cheating A.I. « *Thierry Nguyen*

PlayStation RATING

PROS Easy to play, fun with others, amazingly bizarre, might make your brain explode!
CONS A.I. cheats, funky camera, chunky framerate at times
WEIRDER THAN Pretty much anything else
Pub. Bandai **Dev.** Bandai **ESRB** Everyone **MSRP** $19.99

UFC: SUDDEN IMPACT

ANOTHER TITLE FOR THAT "GAMES WE JUST DON'T NEED" LIST

The popularity of Ultimate Fighting Championship isn't what it used to be. Over the past few years, Pride and K-1, both of which offer far more interesting and entertaining mixed-martial-arts experiences, have surpassed fighting in the octagon in prominence. With that in mind, it comes as no surprise that the latest entry in a once-impressive fighting-game series is a halfhearted, last-gasp-of-breath effort to squeeze out whatever cash is left in the franchise.

The sad thing is, the fighting engine remains decent, but it's nearly the same as the one used in almost every single UFC game that came before *Sudden Impact*. Some new moves let you pin an opponent up against the fence of the octagonal ring, making it easier to give a few quick punches to the face or gut—but so what? This does little in the way of seriously impacting strategy, since the majority of fights happen in the middle of the ring or just inches away from the fence.

Another addition is the story mode, in which you can create a character and train to become one of the top fighters in the UFC. The idea sounds good, and the experimentation involved in combining different fighting styles is interesting, but the actual mechanics of the training mode prove horribly tedious, involving dozens of boring minimatches that require you to perform specific actions to get the full experience.

In fact, it's missed opportunities like the story mode that characterize *Sudden Impact* as a whole. There's a respectable fighting engine at the game's core, but nothing was done to really make it worth your while, especially if you already own another UFC game, THQ's *Pride FC*, or even Konami's *K-1*. « *Giancarlo Varanini*

11/12/93



Date of the first *Ultimate Fighting Championship* pay-per-view event. Royce Gracie emerged as the first Ultimate Fighting champion.



PlayStation RATING

PROS Basically functional fighting engine, includes newer UFC fighters (whoopee!)
CONS The fighting engine has barely changed, UFC in general has lost its edge
DOES ANYONE... Even freakin' care?
Pub. Global Star **Dev.** Opus Studio **ESRB** Teen **MSRP** $19.99

GALACTIC WRESTLING: FEATURING ULTIMATE MUSCLE

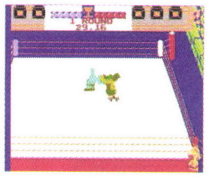
DESPITE ITS MUSCLE, THIS GAME NEEDS A WORKOUT

If you're familiar with the *Ultimate Muscle* cartoon (or the cool little pink figures from the '80s!), then you probably know what to expect from a wrestling game featuring its characters. But you should also realize that calling *Galactic Wrestling* a wrestling game is a bit of a misnomer. While it has an assortment of traditional grappling moves, ranging from suplexes to submissions, the game plays less like a typical wrestling game and more like an insane button-mashing extravaganza. Winning ultimately boils down to who can most quickly execute a move or special attack.

No question, this gameplay style matches the cartoon's frenetic pacing, and it's entertaining to watch some of the utterly ridiculous supermoves the Muscle characters perform in the ring when playing against friends or the computer. That is, until you play more than a dozen or so matches.

After that, *Galactic Wrestling*'s lack of depth creeps in, followed by boredom. Even the different match types (such as tag team, survival, and tournament) do little to enhance gameplay since they're really not all that different from each other (though four individuals fighting is definitely more chaotic than the standard 2-on-2 tag team).

Naturally, these complaints don't bode well for the game's extras. By competing in matches, you earn coins to use in toy machines, which pop out pictures and basic information on various miniature Muscle figures. In the process, you unlock hidden playable characters. There's a lot to unlock, but if you're already bored with what the game initially gives you, you won't even want to bother slogging through countless matches just to play with Lomeinman and use the same moves everyone else has. « *Giancarlo Varanini*



REMEMBER WHEN...?

In the mid-'80s, Ultimate Muscle was a series of tiny two-inch figures known as M.U.S.C.L.E., an acronym for Millions of Unusually Small Creatures Lurking Everywhere. Based on the toys, the *M.U.S.C.L.E.* game (1986) was one of the first NES titles. It was as good as it looks.



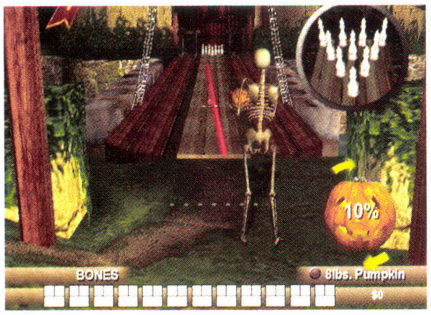
PlayStation RATING

PROS Fast paced, loads of characters, cool supermoves, lots to unlock
CONS Just a button-masher, lacks depth, gets pretty boring
IF ONLY... Every character were actually pink
Pub. Bandai **Dev.** Aki **ESRB** Everyone **MSRP** $39.99

STRIKE FORCE BOWLING

SPARE ME, PLEASE

There's something fundamentally wrong about bowling videogames. While most games bring you experiences you aren't able to have in real life—taking on aliens in hand-to-hand combat, snowboarding like a maniac, and using special mental powers, to name a few—bowling is an experience well within the reach of the average American citizen.



So what can be added to a bowling game to make it something you can't get down at your local bowling alley? Well, how about if you can...*bowl on the moon*? Wacky, huh? And if that isn't exciting enough for you, just imagine bowling on the moon *as a skeleton*!

Which is exactly the novel approach *Strike Force Bowling* takes to entice you into playing. Let me warn you, however, just in case you might be suckered in due to a peculiar affinity for the moon (or Japanese tea gardens, ancient Egypt, ocean-side docks, or pirate ships): The game isn't fun.

One of the disappointing things about *Strike Force* is the static abilities of your players. After you've chosen a digital representative, you place a finite number of skill points in one of three areas (strength, accuracy, and curve), and that's it—your character's skills will remain at the same levels for the remainder of the game. There are multiple settings, but aside from the pirate ship (which rolls back and forth), none of them provides any environmental challenges. The six modes add a little variety to the gameplay, but after you've beaten each of them, they're not much fun to replay.

The game rewards good performances with unlockable new screen personas, alternate settings, and a big-head mode. And let me tell you: If you thought skeletons bowling on the moon was crazy, just wait until you see skeletons *with big heads* bowling on the moon. It's a laugh riot.

The press release touts this as a "great family or party game," but you'll have a lot more fun just going to the bowling alley. « *Dana Jongewaard*



TOP THIS

On November 19, 1998, David Kremer set a world record by stacking 10 bowling balls vertically without using any adhesive.

PlayStation RATING

VERDICT If there had been skeletons with big heads *who were dressed up like mermaids* bowling on the moon, we might have been able to recommend this.

Pub. Crave **Dev.** Lab Rats **ESRB** Everyone **MSRP** $14.99

UEFA EURO 2004

A PREVIEW OF FIFA 2005

These midseason additions to the EA Sports lineup are always interesting. *Euro 2004*'s simulation of the European Cup makes it very specifically aimed at European soccer fans, and for this reason, it may not hold any attraction for you. But don't overlook it if you enjoy a good game of footy, as it has a bunch of new features not found in *FIFA 2004* and acts as a preview of the next full-blown *FIFA*.

First up, EA has tweaked the right analog stick moves, so now more than 10 skill moves exist, including stepovers and drag backs. The through-pass engine has been overhauled, so you no longer need psychic powers to pull off such an action effectively. There's a new chip shot—and about bloody time, too—which you can use to lift the ball over the keeper.

Crossing the ball has been tweaked, but at least it works again (EA Sports shied away from crossing in the past few *FIFA*s since it allowed near-automatic scoring in *FIFA 2001*). The feature comes supplemented with an early cross modifier that lets you play the ball toward the penalty area from anywhere inside your opponent's half.

Cosmetically, *Euro* includes nice effects like focus effects and light blooming (the "new lens flare"). EA's new commentary engine sounds a lot more natural, too, even if Motty sometimes says things a bit late, especially if you shoot the ball after quickly taking possession.

Because of the subject matter, *Euro* might not be worth the investment for all soccer fans. It's a great preview of what will be seen in *FIFA 2005*, but unless you're European (like me), you may just want to rent this as you wait a few months for the real deal. « *John Davison*



PlayStation RATING

SCORE! Great graphics, excellent soundtrack, cool preview of what's next for *FIFA*
FOUL! Eurocentric focus means only true fans will want to play in the United States

Pub. EA Sports **Dev.** EA Sports **ESRB** Everyone **MSRP** $49.99

SMASH COURT TENNIS: PRO TOURNAMENT 2

GAME, SET, ALMOST MATCH

Namco could've taken the easy route with *Smash Court Tennis: Pro Tournament 2* and simply ripped off the formula that previously worked very well for *Sega Sports Tennis*. But *Smash 2* actually plays a little differently—it requires more skill to become a good player. This might immediately turn you away from the game, but don't let it. *Smash 2*'s depth makes it rival *Sega* as the best PS2 tennis title.

If you take part in the pro tour, you'll experience the most robust mode in a tennis game. In it, you create your own player and improve his or her individual abilities by competing in tournaments or playing minigames—your international ranking improves all the while. You can unlock new clothing items (some improve your statistics), music tracks, and other goodies, too. However, it's worth noting that you don't play *full* matches. Instead, you take over at key points that help turn the tide—sometimes these moments won't even happen at all! Such limited control over the outcome is a bit odd and frustrating at first, but it makes sense when you realize that if you did play each match, it'd take forever to build up a respectable player.

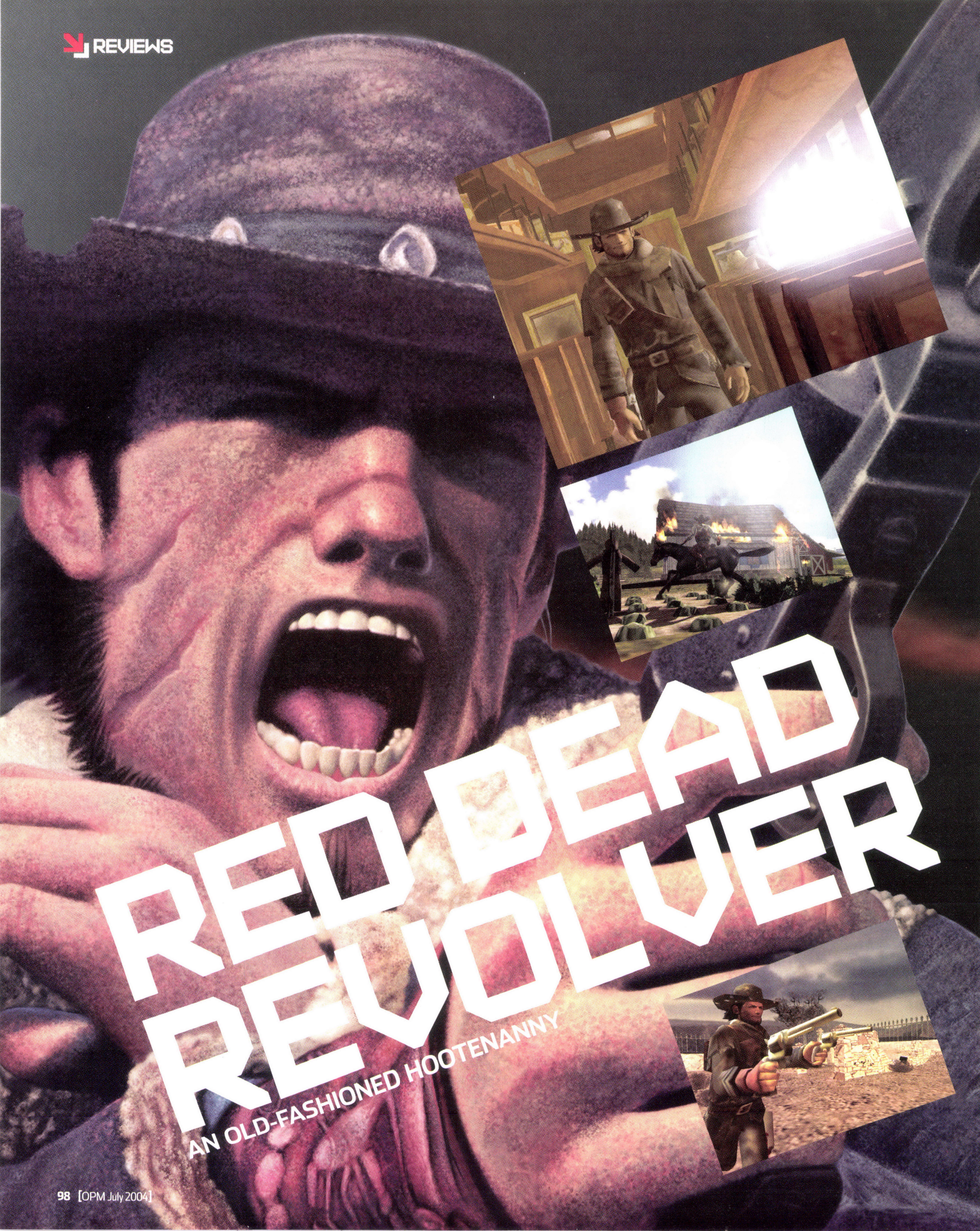
The gameplay's great, too. Just about every shot type you can think of is here, but the effectiveness of each depends on timing and positioning. Over time, you become so familiar with your player's animation that good swings become second nature, and *Smash 2*'s greatness becomes apparent. « *Giancarlo Varanini*



PlayStation RATING

ACES Deep gameplay, excellent career mode that's just plain addictive
FAULTS No direct control over the match system in the pro tour mode

Pub. Namco **Dev.** Namco **ESRB** Everyone **MSRP** $39.99



RED DEAD REVOLVER

AN OLD-FASHIONED HOOTENANNY

It would have been so easy for *Red Dead Revolver* to go so, so wrong. A third-person shooter with an Old West theme is quite an anomaly in a market saturated with modern warfare and pensive cops gone bad; it would have been easy for the game to be either too serious or not serious enough—either a heavy-handed sim or a shallow caricature.

So it is with great pleasure that I am able to report that *Red Dead* walks that fine line with spectacular precision—and style to spare. The presentation perfectly captures the dusty feel of the great Westerns our parents grew up on: A lonely wind blows through decrepit ghost towns, a player piano tinkles in a dim saloon, gunshots ricochet with a high whine, and the slanting sun casts long shadows down Main Street as timeworn gunslingers face off in a quick-draw duel.

But it's not all high drama; a fair share of bumbling enemies (and a few truly bizarre characters) make the scene to provide comic relief. And a handful of additional playable characters complement your role as Red, a bounty hunter seeking revenge for the murder of his father. These characters, combined with a nicely diverse assortment of gameplay conventions, offer a **really solid level of variety**. In addition to the standard clean-up-the-trash bounty hunter fare, you'll find yourself defending a burning farmstead, chasing down a train on horseback, and fighting attackers from atop a stagecoach packed with TNT. And that's only a small sample.

In fact, probably the least impressive thing about *Red Dead* is the central run-and-gun gameplay mechanic. Oh, it's certainly adequate, but the occasionally slippery controls and imprecise aiming can lead to more than a couple moments of frustration, especially when contrasted with all the neat elements found elsewhere. There were times when I felt like the primary gameplay was just marking time between the really cool bits. And of course, as is often the case, the varied gameplay makes for some uneven difficulty; though I spent most of the game chugging merrily along, I did hit the occasional brick wall.

But that didn't stop me from going back and playing through bounty hunter mode, which opened up when I beat the game the first time. This mode prompts you to complete specific challenges in each level in the game—things like beating a target time or killing a certain number of enemies—and rewards you with some really killer cheats and a few extra characters for the game's showdown (read: deathmatch) mode.

Yes, ***Red Dead* is a hell of a good time**. It's fast paced, visually striking, and as stylish as they come. It may not be the deepest (or longest) PS2 shooter, but it's definitely one of the most entertaining. « *Joe Rybicki*

PlayStation RATING

PROS Really impressive presentation, from visual style to the perfect spaghetti-Western soundtrack

CONS Variety makes whole game a little hit-or-miss (it's mostly hits, though)

Pub. Rockstar **Dev.** Rockstar S.D. **ESRB** Mature **MSRP** $49.99

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MTV MUSIC GENERATOR 3: THIS IS THE REMIX

PRETTY MUCH WHAT IT SAYS IN THE TITLE—AND NOT MUCH MORE

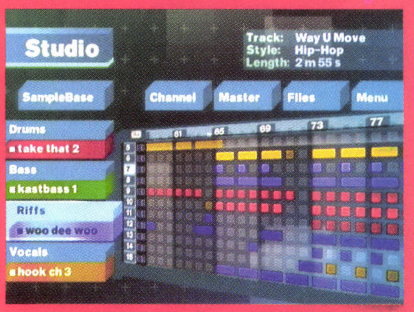
If you've always wanted to make your own music on PS2 but have found previous music-creation tools too daunting, now's the time to start. *Music Generator 3* is by far the easiest music maker available. Load up one of the 10 licensed tracks (including music from folks like Snoop Dogg, OutKast, and Fabolous), and you can be remixing in moments with the aid of a very simple—and helpful—interface.

The process of arranging samples is as easy as cutting and pasting; the subdivided bars and measures allow no room for error. Even the more advanced functions like the Beatbox or the Melody tool require no training whatsoever.

Trouble is, all this ease of use comes at a pretty hefty price. Remixing is fine for what it's worth, and you can get pretty intricate with the tools provided for you, but if you try to create your own compositions from scratch, you'll bump up against a pretty low ceiling.

For one thing, you have to start within the framework of one of the 10 included songs, meaning your sample base is always skewed to a particular style. It would be fantastic if you could remix the OutKast song using vocals from Sean Paul and beats from Snoop Dogg—but you can't. A few additional samples not used in the actual song are provided, but they all tend to be quite similar.

So *MG3* ends up feeling like one of those flip books in which you mix and match heads, bodies, and feet. It's fun for a bit, but not a profoundly creative act. « *Joe Rybicki*



PlayStation RATING

MTV MG3 IN NINE WORDS

Fantastic for beginners, somewhat less so for wannabe musicians.

Pub. Codemasters **Dev.** Mixmax **ESRB** Teen **MSRP** $29.99

[●●●●○○]

WIRELESS HEAD TO HEAD

LOGITECH AND NYKO FACE OFF

Nyko and Logitech want you to live your gaming life without wires, and at least one of them has given you a reason to seriously consider putting aside that DualShock 2. From Nyko, the Air Flo Wireless bills itself as a "high-performance wireless controller with hand-cooling technology," while Logitech's Cordless Action Controller offers a smaller redesign of its excellent yet *huge*, $20 more expensive Cordless Controller (shrinking it down apparently adds action to it).

If you can see your TV screen, either controller works flawlessly. Better yet, with both models you can use multiple controllers of the same type—up to eight!—without getting your signals crossed. If you need to use the D-pad, though, the CAC responds a bit better.

In fact, the CAC feels significantly better in almost all respects. It's much smaller than the AFW, and it doesn't cause your fingers to cramp when you hit the L1 and R1 buttons, as Nyko's product does. Both are noticeably heftier than a DualShock 2, but neither is particular heavy.

The AFW's larger size (and its noticeable lack of vibration capability) can be attributed to the nice but unnecessary hand-cooling element that gives the controller its name. It also has a useless removable stick that plugs into the D-pad, supposedly to make it more like a joystick—it just doesn't work well. I prefer the CAC's approach to extra features: don't do anything beyond what the DualShock 2 does—but don't do anything less, either.

The fact that the CAC costs only $39.99 ($10 less than the AFW) seals the deal. You can't go wrong with it. « *Chris Baker*



PlayStation RATING

CORDLESS ACTION CONTROLLER

[●●●●●]

AIR FLO WIRELESS

[●●●○○]

MYSTIC RIVER

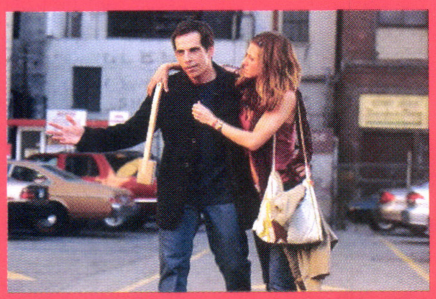
Here's a fun question for the film buffs among you. Who is more significant in film history: Clint Eastwood the icon or Clint Eastwood the director? Ultimately, I think you have to go with Eastwood the icon (there's no getting away from Dirty Harry and The Man With No Name), but such is Eastwood's skill as a director that it's not a clear-cut victory for the icon. Eastwood's a rare director in today's Hollywood because he's an unrepentant adult: He's not afraid to lay down a story without an easy angle or flashy action scene. It's ironic that his years as an action icon have afforded him this crusty sort of freedom, but there you go.

Mystic River is a film that is as close to Eastwood's directing philosophy as you're likely to get. The story involves three men (Sean Penn, Tim Robbins, and Kevin Bacon) who experience a horrifying event as kids and who many years later are confronted with another horrifying event: One of the men's (Penn) daughter is murdered, another (Robbins) is suspected of the murder, and the third (Bacon) investigates the crime. As the director, Eastwood doesn't call attention to himself—he trusts his script (by Brian Helgeland) and his actors, and he gives them room to tell the story.

We know how this turned out: Sean Penn walked off with the Best Actor Oscar this year, while Tim Robbins did the same in the Supporting Actor category. But that's not the end of it. Bacon (who we can now say is probably one of the more underappreciated actors in Hollywood) is a third strong leg of the film's acting triangle, and the smaller roles are no less well observed. Note in particular Laura Linney as Penn's wife and Marcia Gay Harden as Robbins': both of them rise (or fall) according to the fortune of their husbands. It's all great acting, which comes through because of great directing. Thanks, Clint, for being a grown-up.

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ALONG CAME POLLY

(Ben Stiller, Jennifer Aniston)

Ben Stiller plays an uptight neurotic—yeah, way to stretch those acting chops, Ben—who falls for a free-spirited neurotic played by Jennifer Aniston. You'd figure there's ample room for comic gold here, but it's more like comic gold plating: moderately amusing but only just. Stiller and Aniston have done this type of role too much over the course of their respective careers for it to be considered anywhere near fresh. The best moments are reserved for the bit players Philip Seymour Hoffman and Alec "look, Ma, I'm a character actor now" Baldwin. But bit players aren't why we watch films.

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BAD SANTA

(Billy Bob Thornton, Tony Cox)

A cult film, certainly: How could a film about an alcoholic store Santa/criminal be anything but? It was fate: Director Terry Zwigoff made the fabulous freak classic *Ghost World* and the freakier documentary *Crumb;* he probably couldn't make a happy movie with all the antidepressants at Pfizer. And then there's Billy Bob Thornton as the "bad Santa" himself. Thornton's not above cashing in on a big-budget movie, but he made his bones on movies such as *Sling Blade* and *Monster's Ball*. Which makes him perfect as the Worst Santa Ever. These people aren't just unafraid of alienating the mainstream audience, but also delight in the prospect. Even the film's version of the winsome kid (the one who in any other film would melt the bad Santa's heart) is completely screwed in the head. Basically, if you enjoy *Bad Santa,* there's something wrong with you. Congratulations. Don't ever change.

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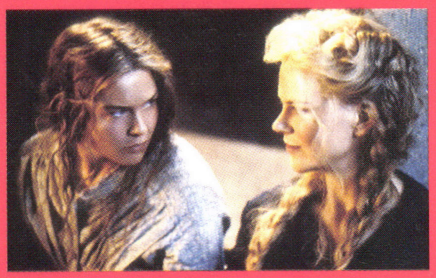


BARBERSHOP 2: BACK IN BUSINESS

(Ice Cube, Cedric the Entertainer)

The plot involves a chain haircuttery coming into the neighborhood and threatening Ice Cube's neighborhood barbershop, but I ask you: Do you care? What you're really here for is more of what made the first *Barbershop* so much fun: Everyone getting their blab on. There may be a person out there who doesn't enjoy a film with Queen Latifah (who gets her own spin-off flick later this year) and Cedric the Entertainer (back as the politically incorrect Eddie) doing the dozens on each other, but I'm not that person. Bring on *Barbershop 3.*

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COLD MOUNTAIN

(Jude Law, Nicole Kidman)

There's a terrific scene of Civil War butchery, as well as an excellent supporting turn by Renée Zellweger, who plays an earthy chicken-neck-wrenching type of gal and got an Oscar for it. But what about Nicole Kidman and Jude Law? Well, honestly, I found it difficult to care if the two stars ever got together. They have the chemistry of pleasant cousins when they're together, and they spend nearly the entire film apart. I realize the whole point is their journey (his physical, hers mental) to come back together, but I can't help but wonder if this trip was really necessary.

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DVD RELEASES

June 1, 2004

Cocoon and Cocoon II
Dukes of Hazzard: Season 1
Eurotrip
Flight of the Navigator
Freaky Friday
Herbie the Love Bug
Loser
Monster
National Lampoon's Senior Trip
Punky Brewster: Season 1
Spider-Man (Deluxe Edition)
Starship Troopers 2

June 8, 2004

The A-Team: Season 1
Along Came Polly
Field of Dreams (Anniversary)
Greystoke: Legend of Tarzan
Mystic River
Quantum Leap: Season 1
Reality Bites (Anniversary)
Robocop Trilogy
Six Feet Under: Season 2
Who's the Boss?: Season 1

June 15, 2004

50 First Dates
Curb Your Enthusiasm: Season 2
Nip/Tuck: Season 1
The Simpsons: Season 4
Tupac: Resurrection

June 22, 2004

Bad Santa
Reno 911: Season 1

June 29, 2004

Barbershop 2
Blazing Saddles (Anniversary)
Cold Mountain
CSI: Miami – Season 1
The Perfect Score
Secret Window
South Park: Season 4
Wonder Woman: Season 1
You Got Served



THE DUKES OF HAZZARD: FIRST SEASON

(Tom Wopat, John Schneider)

Prepuberty, you watched *The Dukes of Hazzard* to see Bo and Luke blast through Hazzard County in the General Lee, thereby causing the vast majority of county tax revenues to be spent on replacement cop cars (for all two cops). Postpuberty, it was to watch Daisy Duke in her Daisy Dukes and possibly to snigger about the idea of a man called "Cooter." If you were watching *Dukes* and you were older than 16, there was something wrong with your head. Should you get this collection? Well, all the old reasons still apply.

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50 FIRST DATES

(Adam Sandler, Drew Barrymore)

As you may know, I believe Adam Sandler should be charged with crimes against humanity for most of his so-called films, then fed to rabid beavers bred especially for gnawing his bones down to the marrow. Having said that, *50 First Dates* is kind of sweet, and there's something almost endearing about the way Sandler tries over and over to win the love of Drew Barrymore, who is delightful as a girl with a short-term-memory issue. Is it enough to get him off my death list? No, but it's enough for a stay of execution.

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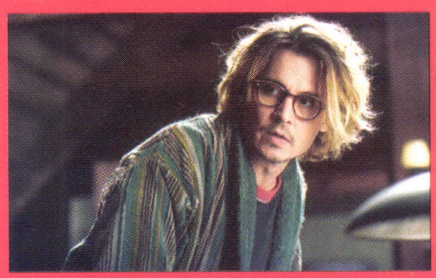


MONSTER

(Charlize Theron, Christina Ricci)

On one level, *Monster* proves all you have to do to get a Best Actress Oscar is be really beautiful and pretend to be really ugly. Charlize Theron did, and she won the award. But Theron also did something remarkable, which was connect with a soul so twisted by life that it did terrible things (that would be Aileen Wuornos, the first female serial killer to be executed in America). Theron's performance was neither exploitative nor falsely sympathetic—it's acting as in a documentary, which, if you think about it, is truly a rare thing. Oscar *earned.*

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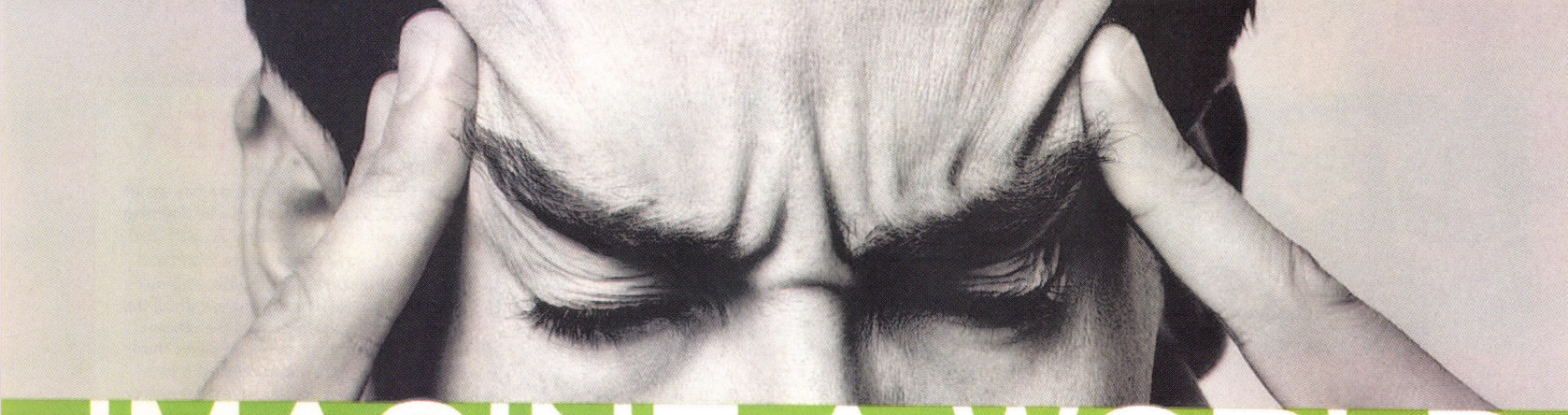


SECRET WINDOW

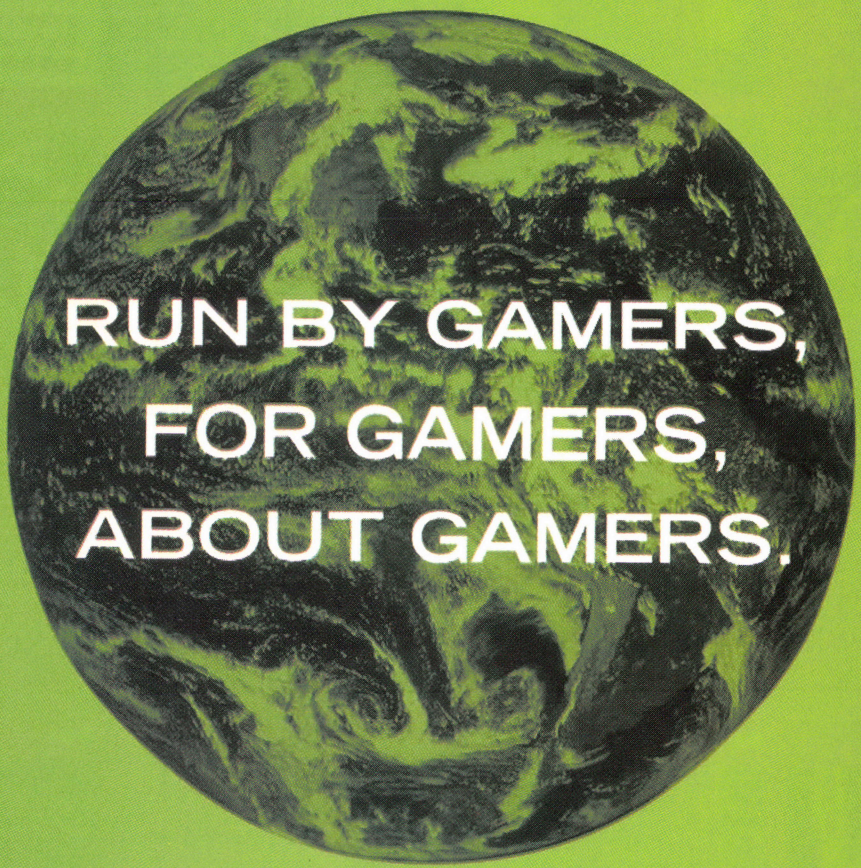
(Johnny Depp, John Turturro)

Johnny Depp plays an eccentric, which is a little like saying "water is wet." This time around, the eccentric is a writer hounded by an angry man who claims Depp's character stole his story. He didn't, of course, but that's not really the issue. The film is based on a novella of Stephen King's, so you're assured there's nothing simple about what's going down. While you figure it out, there's fun to be had with Depp and the rest of the cast of mostly fab actors. Entertaining and a little odd. What more could you ask for?

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IMAGINE A WORLD



WE DO.

COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

THE MAGAZINE FOR
CORE COMPUTER GAMERS

ZIFF DAVIS MEDIA GAME GROUP

PICK ONE UP ON NEWSSTANDS EVERYWHERE.

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Missions impossible solved.

106 TRANSFORMERS
Behind the scenes with the creator.

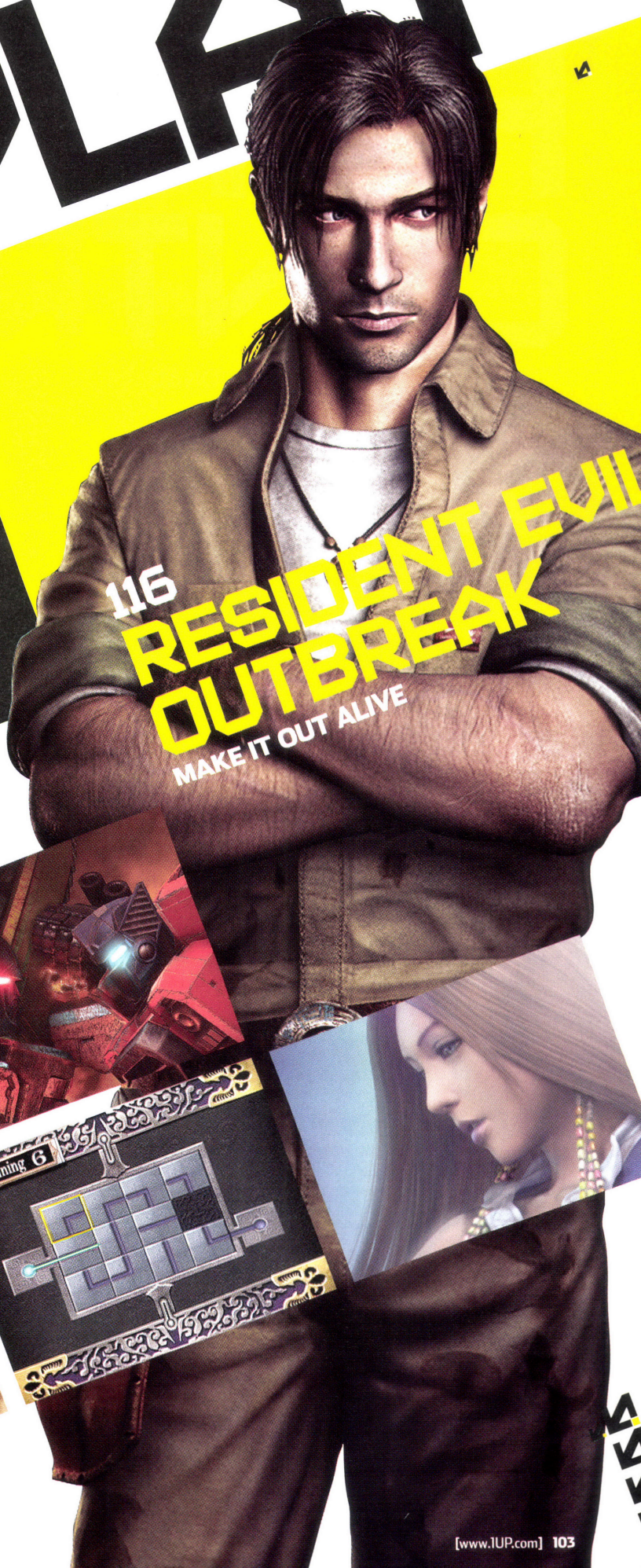
107 MVP BASEBALL 2004
Unlockable heaven.

108 RAINBOW SIX 3
Become a multiplayer expert.

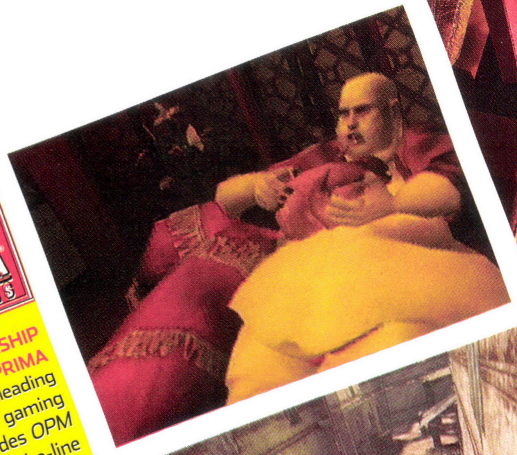
110 THE GAME PAD
Surround sound for your head.

112 ONIMUSHA 3
Don't let the bosses get you down.

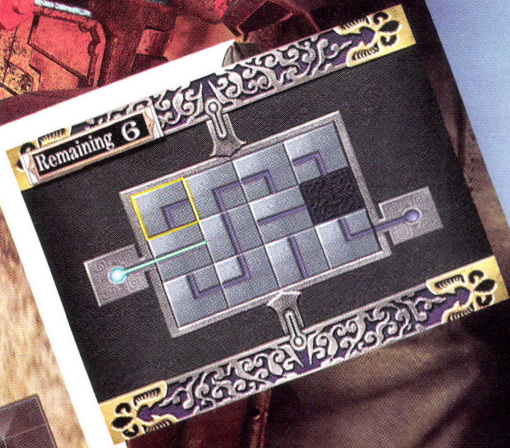
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Test your knowledge.



116 RESIDENT EVIL OUTBREAK
MAKE IT OUT ALIVE









PRIMA GAMES

PARTNERSHIP WITH PRIMA
Prima Games, leading publisher of gaming guides, provides *OPM* with top-of-the-line strategies every month. In this issue, they shared their expertise on *Hitman: Contracts*, *Onimusha 3: Demon Siege*, *Rainbow Six 3*, and *Resident Evil: Outbreak*.

HITMAN CONTRACTS

BECOMING A TRUE PROFESSIONAL

One shiny-domed man with a cache of killing ordnance and a face that permanently looks like it's been slapped by a wet fish. It's not the latest Bruce Willis flick; it's the latest Agent 47 outing. We're along for the ride with complete strategies for two tough missions (number two and number seven), plus some tippage and all the goods on getting the minigun.

YOU'RE A SILENT ASSASSIN!

1, 2 Any two-bit killer off the street can speed through a mission with guns ablaze, but it takes a real hit man to earn the Silent Assassin rating. The fact that you can kill only the targets you have been contracted to hit makes each mission an exciting challenge. You've got to outwit your enemies instead of relying on sheer firepower.

3 KILL ONLY YOUR TARGETS
Never kill anyone except for the specific targets you've been hired to hit. Your targets are easy to spot—they appear as pulsating red circles on the in-game map.

4 MAINTAIN YOUR COVER
Blowing your cover is the worst—every guard in the area rushes over to attack you, causing your alert messages and close encounters to skyrocket. Proper use of deception and solid stealth tactics help minimize the odds of being detected.

5 FIND A DISGUISE
Disguises grant you access to areas you could never reach while wearing your normal clothes. Find a change of clothes or knock someone out and steal their clothes to blend in.

6 MAXIMIZE THE IN-GAME MAP
The in-game map displays the location of each character in the mission when you're playing on normal or expert difficulties. You can use it to monitor a guard's patrol route or to make sure the room you're about to enter is free of enemies.

MISSION TWO: THE MEAT KING'S PARTY

7 Early in the game, you're called on to take out the "Meat King" of Romania, Campbell Sturrock, and his lawyer. Here are two ways to whack the Meat King and have some fun along the way:

8 YOU'RE A SILENT ASSASSIN! TAKE OUT THE MEAT KING—NEAR AND DEAR!
After you've whacked the lawyer, go to the locker room and put on the butcher's clothes you left there. Go into the kitchen, and a butcher orders you to take a meal up to the Meat King. Set the plate down, equip the silenced pistol, and stick it inside the chicken. Go to the south part of the second floor and enter the Meat King's chambers. Walk to the walled-off area and pull out the gun and conceal it. Walk over to the Meat King, and he dismisses his "friends." Press the red button to drop the curtains. When the women have left, hand Sturrock the meal. Shoot him in the head when he turns his attention to the chicken dinner. Retrace your steps to escape.

9, 10 YOU'RE A SILENT ASSASSIN! TAKE OUT THE MEAT KING—SKYLIGHT AND QUICK ESCAPE!
You've just killed the lawyer—pick up the opium pipe. Head to Sturrock's chambers with the opium pipe in hand. Walk to the bed, and one of his female companions will greet you. Drop the opium pipe and press the button next to the bed to lower the curtains. Exit the room through the west doors and step out onto the balcony. Wait for the guard to the south to go inside, then jump to his balcony. Silently go in and knock him out with the syringe. Take his clothes and his pistol, then access the roof via the southeast door on the second floor. Sprint south across the roof to the ladder and climb it. Walk along the steel walkway to the open skylight. Look in and blast the Meat King. Run east off the roof and jump down to your getaway truck.

11 YOU'RE A MURDERING BASTARD! IS THAT A MEAT HOOK?
Use the rail in the meat-packing area of the slaughterhouse to hide dead bodies. Sneak up behind a butcher and kill him with either a meat hook or the fiber wire. Drag the corpse to the steel platform on the west side of the room. When an empty hook approaches on the motorized rail, stop it by using the control panel. Drag the body close to the empty hook, and an option appears on the Action list. Hang the dead butcher on the hook and start the rail moving. The poor guy's co-workers don't even notice the corpse moving along the rail—apparently, they didn't like him all that much!

MISSION SEVEN: TRADITIONS OF THE TRADE

12 Most of the missions in *Hitman: Contracts* provide all kinds of goodies to add to your collection, giving the game a "choose your own adventure" kind of feel, and room 202 in the Thermal Bath Hotel is a great opportunity to pick up some parting gifts. Rifle through Franz's desk to find the following:

- The Do Not Disturb sign can hang on any doorknob in the hotel to ensure privacy.
- The notes from Franz and Fritz provide clues as to the whereabouts of the chemical bomb and help fill in details of the Fuchs brothers' plot.
- The SG220 .S pistol is a nice silenced weapon, though not practical for this mission. Grab it anyway so you can add it to your weapons cache.
- If you're dressed in regular clothing, you can show Franz Fuchs' room key at the front desk and collect his mail. You get a letter that tells you the X-ray room is locked and that Fritz has the only key.

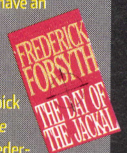
BE NOT SO SILENT—GET THE MINIGUN IN MISSION ONE

13, 14, 15 The almighty minigun appears only in the basement of the sanitarium in mission one. One of the patients in the basement carries it, but he's locked away behind a door you can't open at first. A special key opens the locked door. The item is called Orthmeyer's key card, and it's on Lee Hong's desk in his office on the second floor of his mansion. (The key card appears only in mission nine). Collect Orthmeyer's key card and finish the mission. Save your progress and then quit to the Main menu. Replay the first mission to unlock the basement door. (The door is in the north part of the map. Turn right at the tiny room with the red flashing sensor on the ceiling and pass through the west door.) Knock out or kill the wandering patient, then pick up the minigun.

Your movements are mired while carrying this weapon, but it's absolutely lethal and comes fully loaded with 1,000 rounds of ammunition. Cut a path to the exit point and complete the mission with the minigun on your person to unlock the weapon and then store it in your cache. «

YOU'VE GOT TO OUTWIT YOUR ENEMIES INSTEAD OF RELYING ON SHEER FIREPOWER.

BOOK OF HITMAN

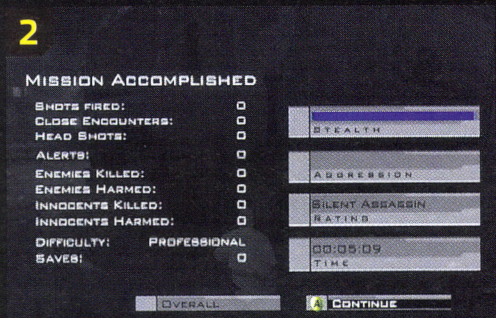


If you don't have an aversion to, you know, books, then you should pick up *Day of the Jackal* by Frederick Forsyth. Sure, it's an old book (written in 1970) about a fictional attempted assassination of Charles de Gaulle, but it still holds up as pretty much the best novel focused on a freelance assassin. Don't get the crappy Bruce Willis movie that's based on the book (*The Jackal*). Then again, the Bruce Willis version has a scene where he shoots Jack Black's arm off, which is kinda neat looking.

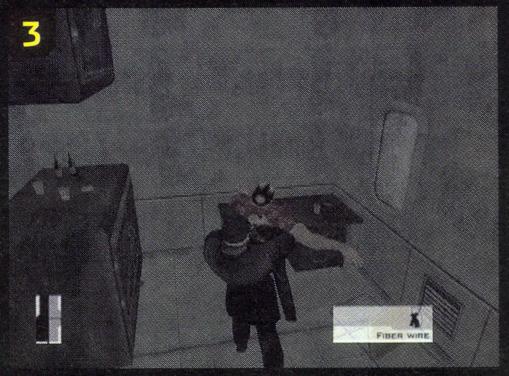
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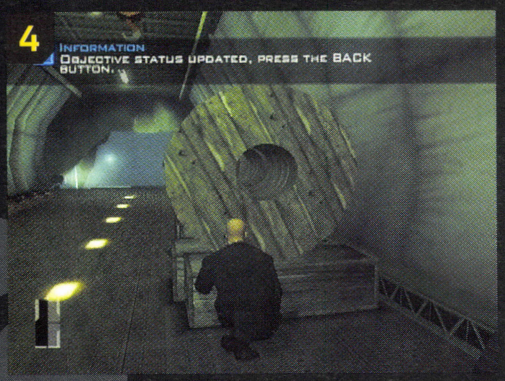
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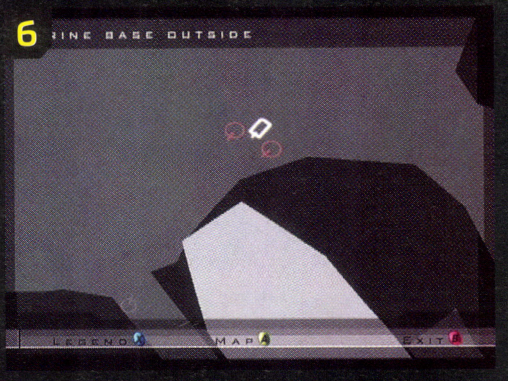
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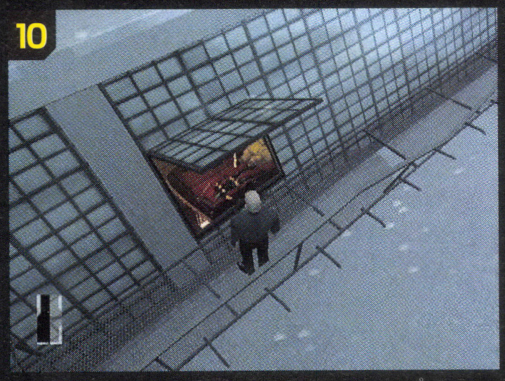
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PRIMED AND READY

PUSHING THE PS2 TO ITS LIMITS

In *Transformers*, there truly is more than meets the eye. Countless hours of work went into creating its expansive environments, massive bosses, and relentless Decepticon army. *OPM* spoke with Andrew Carter, the game's director and executive producer, to learn more about *Transformers*' excellent visuals and how the development team at Melbourne House brought the game to life.



THE MOVIE

Believe it or not, there's actually a new live-action *Transformers* movie in the works. Producers from *X-Men*, *X-Men 2*, and *The League of Extraordinary Gentleman* were attached to the film, but since that announcement, very little has been heard about it. We can only hope it'll be as good as the last movie.

OPM Was it difficult to work with a license like *Transformers*?

ANDREW CARTER As videogame characters, they are just about perfect: They're hard-hitting robots with hard-driving vehicle alter egos—that gave us heaps of inspiration right there! The difficulty came in evolving the characters beyond their current incarnations in the animated series—we felt that the core PS2 audience would want to see something more industrial, more military, and downright tougher. We had to convince Hasbro to allow us to do this with their creations, to take them beyond being toys and blast them into a full-on theater of war.

OPM What was the design process like? Was it decided early on that the game would be focused on Mini-Con collecting?

AC The design evolved very quickly—like everything in the game. In general, we would start with a core idea then immediately hand it over to the artists to sketch ideas for landscapes, robots, weapons, and more; we didn't want to limit them in any way. Once we had some strong visuals, they would be passed back to the game-design team to evolve into detailed settings and characters, and then that would be passed back for modeling.

We were working on the core mechanics in parallel. It was immediately obvious that Mini-Cons would be central to the game—the quest to recover them is an obvious game goal, but we had the idea that they would be the core equipment, and finding them would extend the power of the player's character as the game progressed. It was a natural combination and a powerful incentive for exploration.

OPM The graphics engine is really impressive. How long did it take the team to get it up and running?

AC Our PS2 graphics engine has evolved over a number of titles, most notably *Grand Prix Challenge*, where we managed to push 22 high-poly Formula One cars around detailed tracks at 60 frames per second. We have a dedicated tech team, TDG (technology development group), who focus entirely on the engine. The challenges for this project were to get our animations, effects, and enemies all running at 60fps (it's a bit more involved than a racing game) and to display realistic environments. Like everyone else, TDG was flat-out for the entire project! It was a magical moment late in development when we got our ocean tech in place.

OPM What sort of problems did you run into during the development cycle?

AC Time was always against us. We made this game in just 13 months with a team of 70 developers, plus we had to provide assets to the Japanese company Buildup (who did our CG) in a way that would allow them to meet their own schedule. We were insanely busy for the whole year. It was exciting, though, as there would literally be new things in the game every week.

OPM Were there any features you wanted to include but couldn't due to time or technical constraints?

AC Multiplayer would have been great, particularly co-op, as would playing the Decepticons in deathmatch or a similar mode. But our schedule was so tight, we simply didn't have time to evolve a splitscreen solution that would not have harmed the way we built the worlds. Just like *Metal Gear*, though, this is a single-player adventure, and we are very satisfied with the way it turned out.

OPM Is there a specific feature you're most proud of?

AC I'm most proud of our ecosystem—we've managed to entirely populate our levels with trees, secondary and tertiary vegetation, and draw them out to the horizon without dropping frames or causing pop up. We load the whole level at once—the only time we pause to load during a level is when the Tidal Wave boss fight starts. If you've seen him, you'll know why.

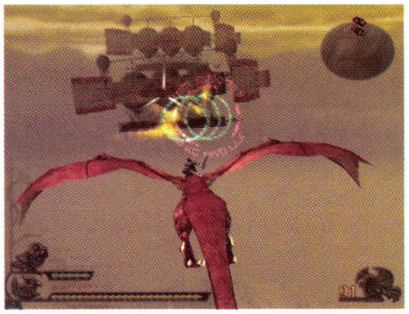
OPM What's next for Melbourne House?

AC If this were a Web interview, there would be a link to a WAV file right here of that famous transform sound. «

PS2 TRICKS AND REVIEW ARCHIVE

Game names in cyan indicate a Greatest Hits title. Ratings in red indicate a score of 5 out of 5. ⚡ indicates the game supports online play.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
.hack//INFECTION	Bandai	●●●●	65
.hack//MUTATION	Bandai	●●●●	69
.hack//OUTBREAK	Bandai	●●●●	73
.hack//QUARANTINE	Bandai	●●●●	76
18 Wheeler American Pro Trucker	Acclaim	●●●●	52
4x4 EVO	GOD Games	●●●●	44
2002 FIFA World Cup	EA Sports	●●●●	58
Ace Combat 04: Shattered Skies	**Namco**	●●●●●	**51**
Activision Anthology	Activision	●●●●	64
Aero Elite: Combat Academy	Sega	●●●	67
The Adventures of Cookie & Cream	Agetec	●●●◐	44
Aggressive Inline	Acclaim	●●●●◐	59
Airblade	Namco	●●●●	53
Airforce Delta Strike	Konami	●●●	78
Alias	Acclaim	●●◐	81
Aliens Versus Predator: Extinction	EA Games	●●●◐	72
All-Star Baseball 2002	Acclaim	●●●◐	44
All-Star Baseball 2003	Acclaim	●●●◐	56
All-Star Baseball 2004	Acclaim	●●●	67
⚡ All-Star Baseball 2005	Acclaim	●●◐	80
Alter Echo	THQ	●●	73
American Idol	Codemasters	●	77
⚡ Amplitude	Sony CEA	●●●●	68
Antz Extreme Racing	Empire	●◐	61
Ape Escape 2	Ubisoft	●●●●◐	70
Aqua Aqua	3DO	●●	42
Arc the Lad: Twilight of the Spirits	Sony CEA	●●●●	70
Arctic Thunder	Midway	●	50
Armored Core 2	Agetec	●●●	39
Armored Core 2: Another Age	Agetec	●●●◐	48
Armored Core 3	Agetec	●●●◐	61
Army Men: Air Attack	3DO	●●●◐	44
Army Men: Green Rogue	3DO	●●	45
Army Men RTS	3DO	●●●●	56
Army Men: Sarge's Heroes 2	3DO	●●◐	45
ATV Offroad Fury	**Sony CEA**	●●●●	**42**
⚡ ATV Offroad Fury 2	**Sony CEA**	●●●●	**64**
ATV Quad Power Racing 2	Acclaim	●●●●	66
⚡ Auto Modellista	Capcom	●●◐	69
Backyard Baseball	Atari	●●◐	81
Backyard Wrestling: Don't Try This at Home	Eidos	●●◐	75
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance	**Interplay**	●●●●◐	**52**
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance II	Interplay	●●●◐	77
Barbarian	Titus	●●	57
Bass Strike Virtual Fishing Tournament	THQ	●◐	51
Batman: Rise of Sin Tzu	Ubisoft	●●	74
Batman: Vengeance	Ubisoft	●●●	51
Battle Engine Aquila	Atari	●●●◐	65
Battlestar Galactica	Vivendi Universal	●●●	76
Beyond Good & Evil	Ubisoft	●●●●	75
Big Mutha Truckers	Empire	●●●	71
Bionicle: The Game	EA Games	●●◐	75
Black & Bruised	Majesco	●●●●	67
Blade II	Activision	●●	62
Blood Omen 2	Eidos	●●●◐	57
BloodRayne	Majesco	●●●◐	63
Bloody Roar 3	Activision	●●●◐	47
Bloody Roar 4	Konami	●	75
Blowout	Majesco	●●●	77
BMX XXX	Acclaim	●◐	65
Bombastic	Capcom	●●◐	72
Breath of Fire: Dragon Quarter	Capcom	●●●●	67
Britney's Dance Beat	THQ	●●●●	58
The Bouncer	Square EA	●●●	42
Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Chaos Bleeds	Sierra/Fox	●●●◑	73
Burnout	Acclaim	●●●●◐	52
Burnout 2: Point of Impact	Acclaim	●●●●	63
Butt-Ugly Martians: Zoom or Doom!	Crave	●●	73
Cabela's Big Game Hunter	Activision	●●◐	67
Cabela's Dangerous Hunts	Activision	●●◐	76
Cabela's Deer Hunt 2004 Season	Activision	●●◐	74
Capcom vs. SNK 2	Capcom	●●●●◐	51
Carmen Sandiego: The Secret of the Stolen Drums	Bam	●●◐	77
CART Fury	Midway	●	47
Casper: Spirit Dimensions	TDK Mediactive	●●◐	50
Castlevania: Lament of Innocence	Konami	●●●●	74
The Cat in the Hat	Vivendi Universal	●●	76
⚡ Champions of Norrath: Realms of EverQuest	Sony Online	●●●●◐	78
Chaos Legion	Capcom	●●●◐	70
⚡ Chessmaster	Ubisoft	●●●◐	70
Choplifter: Crisis Shield	Xicat	●●●	69
City Crisis	Take-Two	●●●	48
Clock Tower 3	Capcom	●●●	68
Colin McRae Rally 3	**Codemasters**	●●●●●	**68**
Commandos 2: Men of Courage	Eidos	●●	62
Conflict: Desert Storm	**Gotham Games**	●◐	**63**
Conflict: Desert Storm II	Gotham Games	●●●	74
Conflict Zone	Ubisoft	●●◐	63
Contra: Shattered Soldier	Konami	●●●●◐	64
Corvette	Global Star	●●●◐	81
Cool Boarders 2001	Sony CEA	●●●●	46
Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex	**Universal**	●●●◐	**51**
Crash Nitro Kart	Vivendi Universal	●●●◐	76
Crazy Taxi	**Acclaim**	●●●●	**46**
Crimson Sea 2	Koei	●●●◐	80
Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon	Ubisoft	●●	74
Culdcept	SNK	●●●◐	75
Dark Angel: Vampire Apocalypse	Metro3D	●◐	49
Dark Cloud	**Sony CEA**	●●●●◐	**46**
Dark Cloud 2	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**66**
Dark Summit	THQ	●●●◐	52
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2	**Acclaim**	●●●◐	**50**
DDRMAX	Konami	●●●●	63
DDRMAX 2	Konami	●●●●	74
Dead or Alive 2: Hardcore	Tecmo	●●●●◐	39
Dead to Rights	**Namco**	●●●	**65**
Def Jam: Vendetta	EA Sports Big	●●●●	67
Defender	Midway	●●●◐	62
⚡ Destruction Derby Arenas	Gathering	●●◐	80
Deus Ex: The Conspiracy	Eidos	●●●●◐	56
Devil May Cry	**Capcom**	●●●●●	**50**
Devil May Cry 2	Capcom	●●●	66
Dino Stalker	Capcom	●●●◐	61
Disaster Report	Agetec	●●●◐	65
Disgaea: Hour of Darkness	Atlus	●●●●	72
Disney Golf	EA Games	●●●●	61
Disney's Extreme Skate Adventure	Activision	●●●●	73
Disney's PK: Out of the Shadows	Ubisoft	●●◐	63
Disney's Treasure Planet	Sony CEA	●●●◐	64
Donald Duck: Goin' Quackers	Ubisoft	●●●◐	42
Downforce	Titus	●●	57
Downhill Domination	Sony CEA	●●●●	71
Dr. Muto	Midway	●●◐	63
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai	Atari	●●●◐	65
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2	Atari	●●◐	76
Dragon Rage	3DO	●◐	54
Drakan: The Ancients' Gates	Sony CEA	●●●●	53
Drakengard	Square Enix USA	●●	78



From the back of a fire-breathing dragon, you will save the day. How about from the back of a jet? See below.

FLY ON A JET Complete the free mission at Shinjuku to unlock the jet. On any sky mission in which you chose which dragon to take, highlight Chaos Dragon and press Down. Select it and start your mission—you'll be riding a jet.

HIT ENEMIES THROUGH A WALL On any ground mission, find a spot with a wall and enemies on the other side. Do a running charge, and you will strike down the enemies.



PLAY THE DEMO!

MVP 2004

While you can't open up any of these classic modes in this month's demo, you will get plenty of time to check out this amazing game.



SEA OF LOVE

"*Crimson Sea 2* is basically *Dynasty Warriors* in space with a gun thrown in...it's as though Dante decided to teach Lieu Bei some extra tricks."
Thierry Nguyen



CRY, CRY AGAIN

"As sophomore efforts in promising new series go, no game has ever let me down more than *Devil May Cry 2*."
Chris Baker

MVP 2004

UNLOCKING THE CLASSICS



While most of the MVP Rewards are locked, quite a few are completely hidden. Here's a list of all the old-timey things you *can't* see, along with how much they'll cost to unlock. Just what you wanted now that Opening Day has passed: a list takes the guesswork out of spending your MVP Points.

OLD-TIME PLAYERS

4,000 POINTS

- Jimmie Foxx
- Eddie Matthews
- Joe Morgan
- Jim Palmer
- Mike Schmidt
- Tom Seaver
- Warren Spahn
- Willie Stargell
- Robin Yount

4,500 POINTS

- Sparky Anderson
- Yogi Berra
- Roy Campanella
- Lou Gehrig
- Bob Gibson
- Reggie Jackson
- Walter Johnson
- Tommy Lasorda
- Willie McCovey
- Satchel Paige
- Nolan Ryan
- Honus Wagner
- Cy Young

5,000 POINTS

- Ty Cobb
- Jackie Robinson
- Babe Ruth

OLD TIME JERSEYS

500 POINTS

- Cleveland Indians 1975 jerseys
- Cincinnati Reds 1970 jerseys

750 POINTS

- Chicago Cubs 1954 jerseys
- St. Louis Cardinals 1934 jerseys
- Pittsburgh Pirates 1916 jerseys
- New York Giants 1954 jerseys
- Detroit Tigers 1906 jerseys
- Brooklyn Dodgers 1941 jerseys

1,000 POINTS

- Washington Senators 1913 jerseys
- Boston Red Sox 1903 jerseys
- Chicago White Sox 1919 jerseys
- New York Yankees 1927 jerseys

OLD TIME BALLPARKS

4,000 POINTS

- Sportsman's Park
- Shibe Park Stadium

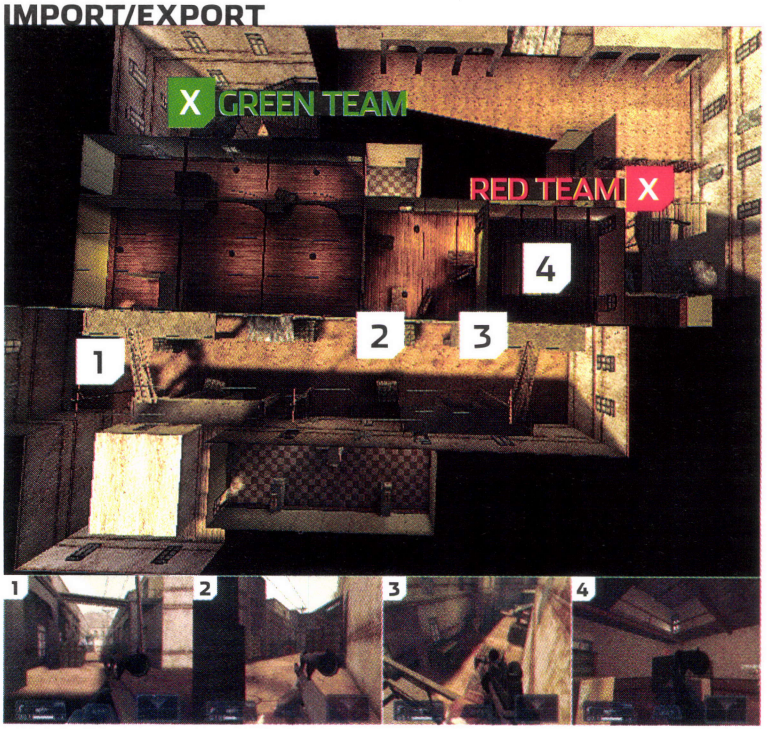
5,000 POINTS

- Forbes Field
- The Polo Grounds

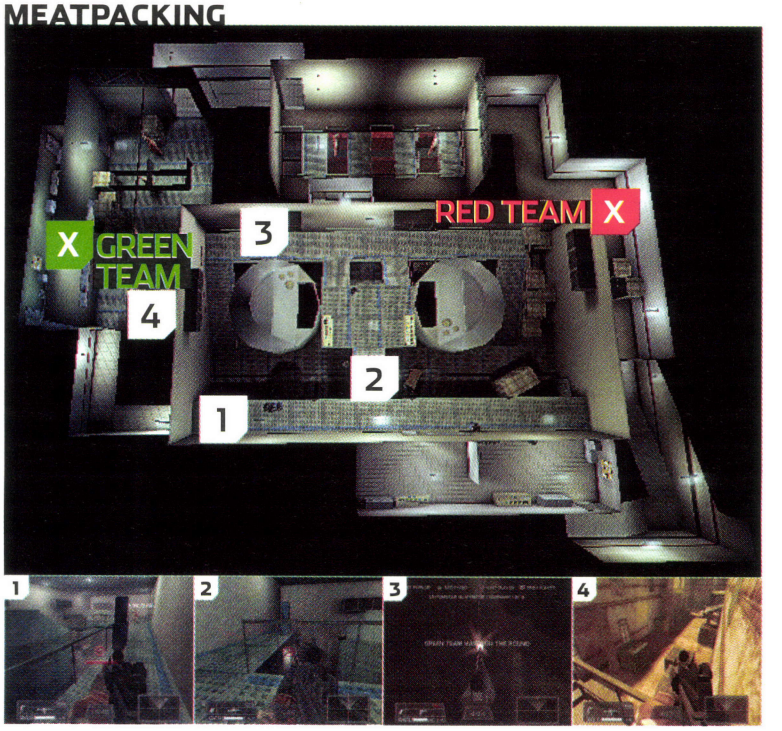
RAINBOW SIX 3

MULTIPLAYER SHUTOUTS AND TAKEDOWNS

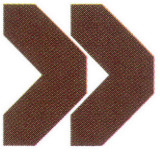
IMPORT/EXPORT



MEATPACKING







Tag, bag, and generally annoy your foes into a fetal position of shame courtesy of our attack plans for four of the best multiplayer maps. Learn the finest ambush points or find the perfect spot to camp for hapless goons. Then radio some vicious verbal put-downs to add insult to injury (put-downs not included).

IMPORT/EXPORT

The map consists of a set of medium-sized areas next to a long street that provides a good line of fire from both upper ends. A medium-range or assault weapon should be used here. The rooms contain few cover points, so make sure they are well covered but **be aware of grenades from above.** Have a team member cover the street while the others clean the rooms.

Exercise extreme caution when entering the team-insertion areas. They are vulnerable to enemy fire from above. Two windows (one on each side) allow you to keep an eye on the street from inside.



1 Green-team members with scoped rifles will enjoy this spot early on. There's little cover, but as long as you **stay within the shadowy area,** opponents at the opposite end of the street will have a hard time spotting you. Use this spot to get early kills, then move on.

2 You won't have to worry about being flanked while hiding among these crates. This is one of the safest spots in the street. However, **there's a small gap between the two crates** that may give an observant opponent a glimpse of your hiding spot.

3 The balconies lining the street may seem like perfect sniping spots, but the lack of cover makes using them risky. **This balcony can work well for the red team early in the match.** Provide suppressing fire while your team takes to the street below, but don't camp here for longer than a few seconds.

4 Try to set up an ambush in this room by covering the upper-level walkway from the floor. With the help of a teammate, **you can surprise enemies as they race along this walkway.** Be ready to escape if the ambush fails—your enemy will likely retaliate with grenades.

MEATPACKING

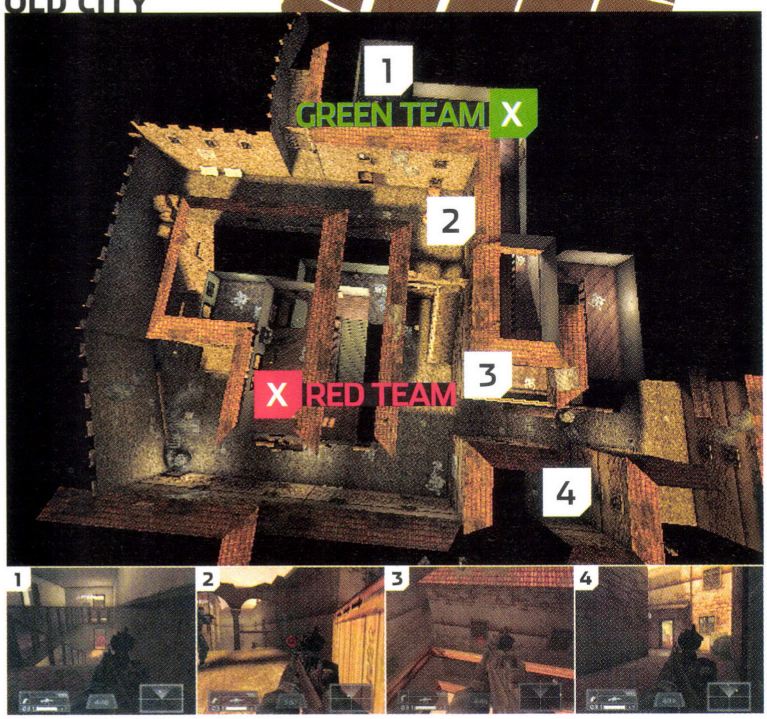
Except for the large processing room and some small rooms, most fights here occur in narrow halls. **If you have good frag-grenade skills, you can do some damage here.** Use a gas grenade to cover your back in those narrow corridors. In the meat-processing room, remember to look up for enemies on the catwalks when entering from the two lower doors. Teammates should not be too close to each other in the corridors, since a cleverly thrown grenade could wipe them all out. A team member could also go around the other way to try to catch enemies from the back. Long-range weapons are not useful here.

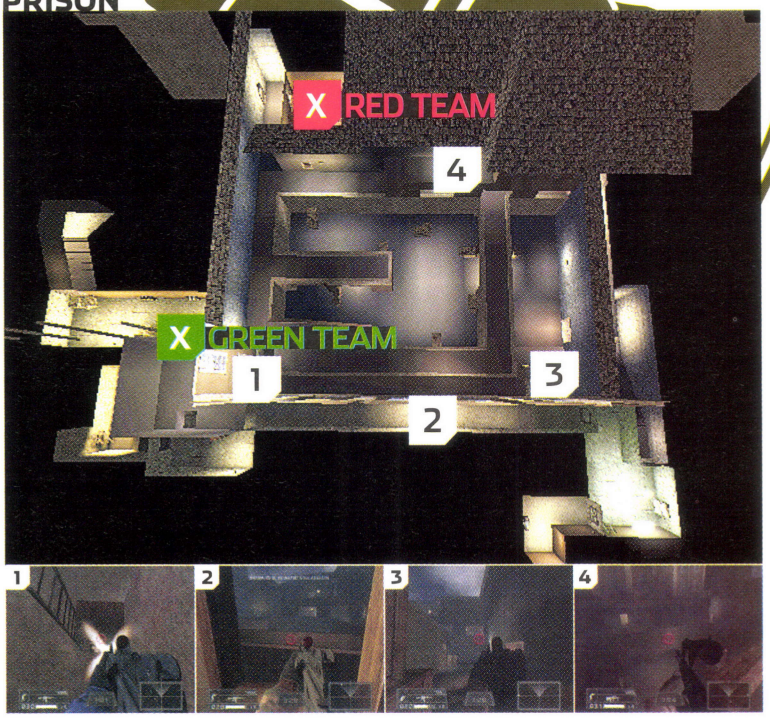
1 This is one of the best spots for covering the meat-processing room. Step back into the corner and drop into a crouch. **From this position, you have a fairly clear shot of anyone who enters the room,** whether they're on the catwalks or on the floor below. Watch out for enemies attacking through the doorway on the right.

2 If you're on the red team, try to reach this spot early with the support of your teammates. **Crouch on the catwalk and aim down at the doorway below.** There's a good chance the green team will enter here, allowing you to hit them with automatic fire and grenades.

3 The ramp and catwalk located above this position create a concealed, shadowy area. You won't be able to see enemies on the catwalks above, but they won't be able to see you, either. **Instead, concentrate on ambushing opponents** on the ground floor. Your muzzle flash will give away your position, so make sure the first few rounds hit.

4 Filled with slabs of beef and crates, this room has several good hiding spots, especially if you're the last surviving member of your team. **When assaulting the room, try to bring along some friends to cover all the corners.** Be sure to check the side room for stragglers. If you're hiding, hold near these crates and aim at this doorway. This nar-





row field of view allows you to quickly ambush anyone who approaches from either direction.

OLD CITY

This urban area has medium-sized lines of fire in the streets and close-quarter zones inside the buildings, so equip an assault weapon. The streets offer few cover positions, so always run for the next corner. There is no perfect sniping position, but there is an elevated position on a balcony that can be used to toss grenades at enemies passing below.

1 The stairway near the green team's insertion point makes for a nice defensive position, particularly if your teammates lend a hand. **Place one teammate at the window** and another aiming down the stairway toward the doorway. If another teammate covers the room to the left, you can stay put and dare your opponents to attack.

2 The streets are never safe, but if you have a teammate following you, you can make a stand at this corner. **Use the crates for cover and scan this street ahead.** Meanwhile, have your teammate cover the stairway to the left. Opponents approaching from this direction won't be able to see you until they reach the top of the stairs.

3 As far as sniping goes, this balcony is totally worthless. The high railing obscures the street below, making it hard to pick off opponents. **Instead, try tossing grenades down.** Ricochet grenades off the nearby walls to hit areas that are beyond your field of view.

4 Are you the last surviving member of your team? Well, **it's time to camp in this dead-end alley.** Although the adjoining street doesn't experience high traffic, your opponents will eventually rush past you as they search. Make sure your shots count, since there's no escape here.

R63: THE MOVIE? Hmm, a level in which Team Rainbow, thwarting a plot involving nerve gas and hostages, enters Alcatraz through the sewer system and then has a shootout in the shower room. Sounds suspiciously like the best movie Michael Bay's ever done, *The Rock*. Give it a rental for some mindless action fun, and then try to replicate that same shower firefight with your friends in the game.

PRISON

The action here takes place in and around the exercise yard. The outside section is dark, so night and heat vision will be useful. Three sniping spots offer a view of the courtyard: one from the tower, one from the south hall window, and one from the small balcony on the north building. The central area is less dangerous than the one in the streets if you are on the lower level, but it is still a good place to catch a grenade on the head.

When playing as a team, the green team should not rush out into the courtyard. They start on a lower level and are vulnerable to grenades. Ladders here are tall, so think twice before climbing one.

1 The tower is the most comprehensive sniping position, offering a wide, elevated view of the courtyard. **If you're on the red team, get to this spot quickly** and open up on your green opponents while they're still on the lower levels. Turn around and watch this ladder every few seconds. This is the only way you can be flanked.

2 This window is a favorite sniping spot for the green team. While it offers a decent view of the courtyard, both ends of the hallway are completely open, leaving you open to flanking attacks from the left and right. Unless you have a buddy to watch your back, **scan the courtyard for enemies and keep moving.**

3 Step up along the side of these crates to cover the eastern side of the courtyard and the large window to the north. **Monitor these high-traffic areas to pick off unsuspecting opponents.** This is a more defensible alternative to the southern window in the hallway, making it useful when you're on your own.

4 Since it's so close to their insertion point, **the red team will benefit most from this balcony** overlooking the courtyard. Still, it should be used sparingly, preferably within the first few seconds of the round. There are two ladders leading up to this balcony, so keep an eye on both. «

THE GAME PAD

HEADPHONES THAT KEEP THE NOISE DOWN WHILE TURNING IT UP

All your life, your mom/upstairs neighbor/girlfriend/wife has been bellowing the same familiar shout: "Turn down that damn noise!" All you ask is to be able to experience games as they are supposed to be experienced: loud as hell. But discretion has to be the better part of valor here, and the best way out of this mess is to invest in a nice pair of cans. When we say nice, we mean really nice. Don't think of them as just a pair of headphones, think of how much you'd spend on that whole audio system that you're just not able to use because of the complaints!

Go to any electronics store and you'll see a wide array of headphones; many new sets work audio wonders when you're up for some late-night gaming. So which to choose? Traditional wired headphones offer quality at a reasonable price if money isn't flowing freely. And we love wireless headphones because of the freedom they allow, although going cordless definitely requires a heftier investment. So whether you've got $50 or $500 to spend, we've got a pair of headphones for you.

« Darren Gladstone

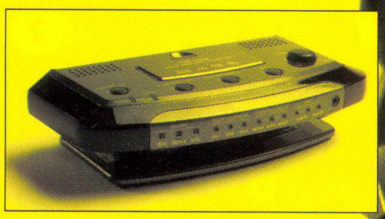
CORDLESS FOR LESS

$100

Sony MDR-IF540RK

If you're looking to cut the cord without dropping a lot of green, this is your best bet. The 540RKs have pretty good performance for the price, offering bass boost and a head-kicking vibration function that is built for games—and people who really crave a pounding headache.





SURROUND SOUND

$475 Pioneer SE-DIR800C

Want 5.1 Dolby Digital sound but don't have room for all the speakers (or the money to pay for 'em, for that matter)? Pioneer has a new kit just for you. It's got a built-in decoder that supports Dolby Digital, DTS, and Dolby Pro Logic II surround sound.



CADILLAC OPTION

$800

Sony MDR-DS8000

The crazy option that is way out of reach but nice to know about anyway. This infrared cordless kit offers all the bells and whistles, decoding just about every sound format invented. The headphones are light as a feather and have a funky open-ear design. You can have six-channel surround and still hear someone sneaking up behind you.

Photos by Mark McLean

PLUG AND PLAY

$40 Stanton DJ Pro 60

Perfect for on-the-go music and late-night covert gaming sessions, this is one kick-ass and relatively affordable setup. The 60s are comfortable around your cabeza, and the set comes with a converter so that you can plug these guys directly into your A/V receiver or your MP3 player.





WIRED FOR SOUND

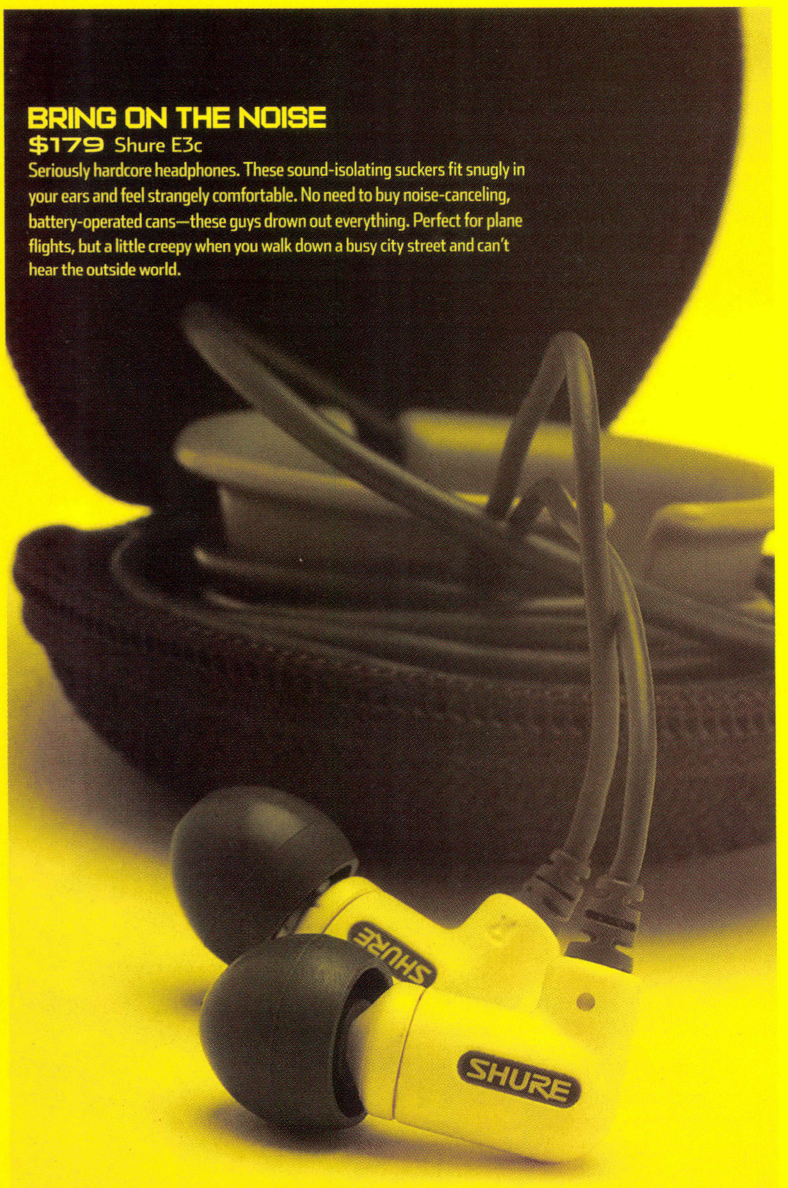
$95 Grado SR80

If you're willing to part with a little more money, then Grado's SR80 is a great choice for audiophiles watching the bottom line. First off, you've got big, comfortable cushions padding your ears. More important, though, is great sound reproduction in the mids and highs, and bass that kicks your cranium.

BRING ON THE NOISE

$179 Shure E3c

Seriously hardcore headphones. These sound-isolating suckers fit snugly in your ears and feel strangely comfortable. No need to buy noise-canceling, battery-operated cans—these guys drown out everything. Perfect for plane flights, but a little creepy when you walk down a busy city street and can't hear the outside world.





AURAL HEAVEN

$500

Sennheiser HD 650

If you don't move after you plunk your ass on the couch and pick up the controller, then the 650s will suit you just fine. Dropping these babies on your cranium will deliver you as close to audio nirvana as you can get without strapping six speakers to your head. A lightweight design, solid sound, and durable construction make this set one to be reckoned with. It's a good job, as $500 is a lot of cash for a pair of headphones.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Driven	Bam	●	52
Driving Emotion Type-S	Square EA	●●◖	41
Drome Racers	EA Games	●●◖	64
Dropship	Bam	●●●●	57
Dual Hearts	Atlus	●●●	61
Dynasty Tactics	Koei	●●●●◖	61
Dynasty Tactics 2	Koei	●●●●	74
Dynasty Warriors 2	Koei	●●●●	38
Dynasty Warriors 3	Koei	●●●●	52
Dynasty Warriors 3: Xtreme Legends	Koei	●●●◖	65
Dynasty Warriors 4	Koei	●●●●◖	68
Dynasty Warriors 4: Xtreme Legends	Koei	●●●◖	75
Ecco the Dolphin: Defender of the Future	Acclaim	●●◖	56
Egg Mania: Eggstreme Madness	Kemco	●●◖	61
⚡Jay Clubworld	Crave	●●	73
Endgame	Empire	●●	59
Enter the Matrix	Atari	●●●	71
Ephemeral Fantasia	Konami	●◖	49
Escape From Monkey Island	**LucasArts**	**●●●●●**	**46**
⚡ESPN College Hoops	Sega Sports	●●●◖	76
ESPN International Track & Field	Konami	●●●	39
ESPN International Winter Sports 2002	Konami	●●●●	54
⚡ESPN Major League Baseball	Sega Sports	●●●◖	80
ESPN MLS Extra Time	Konami	●●	44
ESPN National Hockey Night	Konami	●◖	45
ESPN NBA 2Night	Konami	●●	42
ESPN NBA 2Night 2002	Konami	●●●	56
⚡ESPN NBA Basketball	**Sega Sports**	**●●●●●**	**75**
⚡ESPN NHL Hockey	Sega Sports	●●●●◖	73
⚡ESPN NFL Football	Sega Sports	●●●●◖	72
ESPN Winter X Games Snowboarding	Konami	●●●	41
ESPN Winter X Games Snowboarding 2002	Konami	●●●	53
ESPN X Games Skateboarding	Konami	●●●●	49
Eternal Ring	Agetec	●●	38
Eve of Extinction	Eidos	●●◖	56
Everblue 2	Capcom	●●●	66
Evergrace	Agetec	●●	39
⚡EverQuest Online Adventures	Sony Online	●●◖	66
⚡EverQuest Online Adventures: Frontiers	Sony Online	●●●◖	77
Evil Dead: A Fistful of Boomstick	THQ	●●●	70
Evil Twin	Ubisoft	●●	52
Evolution Skateboarding	Konami	●●◖	63
Evolution Snowboarding	Konami	●	65
Extermination	Sony CEA	●●◖	48
Extreme-G III	Acclaim	●●●●	50
EyeToy: Groove	Sony CEA	●●●●◖	80
F1 2001	**EA Sports**	**●●●●●**	**52**
F1 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◖	60
F1 Career Challenge	**EA Sports**	**●●●●●**	**71**
F1 Championship	Ubisoft	●●●●	43
F1 Championship Season 2000	EA Sports	●●◖	41
Fallout: Brotherhood of Steel	Interplay	●●◖	78
Fantavision	Sony CEA	●●●●	40
Fatal Frame	Tecmo	●●●●	55
Fatal Frame 2: Crimson Butterfly	Tecmo	●●●●	77
Ferrari F355 Challenge	Sega	●●	61
FIFA 2001 Major League Soccer	EA Sports	●●●●◖	39
FIFA 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◖	51
FIFA Soccer 2003	**EA Sports**	**●●●●●**	**63**
⚡FIFA Soccer 2004	**EA Sports**	**●●●●●**	**75**
⚡Fight Night 2004	EA Sports	●●●●	80
Fighter Maker 2	Agetec	●◖	64
Final Fantasy X	**Square EA**	**●●●●●**	**53**
Final Fantasy X-2	**Square Enix USA**	**●●●●●**	**75**
⚡Final Fantasy XI	**Square Enix USA**	**●●●●●**	**78**
Finding Nemo	THQ	●●●◖	71
Fireblade	Midway	●●◖	59
Fisherman's Challenge	Konami	●●	67
Ford Racing 2	Gotham Games	●●◖	76
Forever Kingdom	Agetec	●◖	53
Formula One 2001	Sony CEA	●●◖	50
Freaky Flyers	Midway	●●●◖	72
Freedom Fighters	**EA Games**	**●●●●●**	**73**
Freekstyle	**EA Sports Big**	**●●●●**	**59**
Freestyle Metal X	Midway	●●●	71
Frequency	Sony CEA	●●●◖	52
Frogger: The Great Quest	Konami	●◖	53
Frogger's Adventure: The Rescue	Konami	●●◖	76
Fugitive Hunter	Encore	●	76

SLIDING PUZZLES

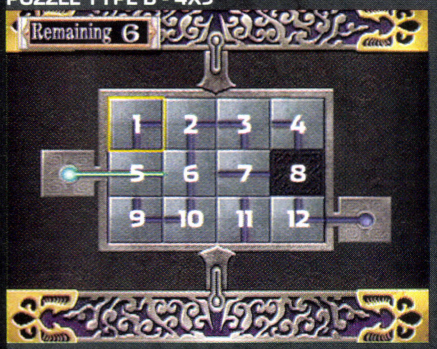
Sick of racking your brain when doing *Onimusha*'s infamous sliding puzzles? Rest your simple minds; here are the solutions to every single one.

Each puzzle has the dimensions of one of the three you see surrounding this text (3x3, 4x3, or 4x4). As you can see, we've numbered each position on each board from 1 to however many total positions there are (9, 12, or 16), going from left to right. When you confront a puzzle, check the chart below and simply move the tile in the designated space. You'll unlock a much-needed jewel in no time.

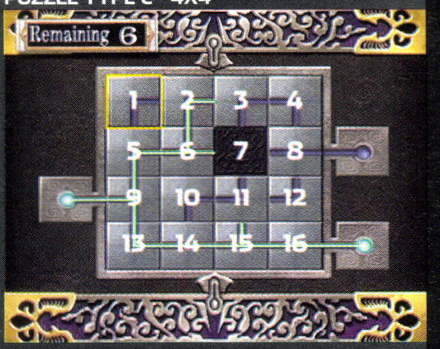
PUZZLE TYPE A - 3X3



PUZZLE TYPE B - 4X3



PUZZLE TYPE C - 4X4



NUMBER	TYPE	CHARACTER	LOCATION	TILE SEQUENCE
1	A	Samanosuke	Arc de Triomphe, France	1, 4, 7
2	A	Jacques	Lazuline Hall, Japan	1, 4, 5, 8
3	B	Samanosuke	Sewer area, France	3, 7, 6, 5, 1
4	A	Jacques	Sakai Main Street (beach), Japan	6, 5, 8, 9, 6
5	A	Jacques	Sakai Main Street, Japan	5, 4, 1, 2, 5, 6
6	B	Jacques	Western ship (mast), Japan	1, 5, 6, 7, 11
7	B	Jacques	Western ship, Japan	1, 2, 3, 7, 6, 2
8	B	Samanosuke	Slicing corridor, France	7, 6, 10, 11, 12, 8
9	C	Samanosuke	Slicing corridor, France	8, 12, 11, 10, 6
10	C	Jacques	Undersea temple (broken catwalk)	9, 10, 11, 7, 6
11	C	Samanosuke	Undersea temple (flame chamber)	14, 10, 11, 7, 6, 5
12	C	Samanosuke	Zoo, France	12, 8, 7, 6, 10
13	C	Samanosuke	Grand Street, France	7, 3, 2, 6, 10
14	C	Jacques	Castle roof, Japan	2, 3, 7, 11, 15
15	C	Samanosuke	Eiffel Tower, France	3, 4, 8, 7, 11, 10

all times. This crazy witch will spin, fly, and leap all over the place, but her bark is worse than her bite. The key here is to keep your guard up. Once she lands on solid ground and you are a medium distance away from her, she will scream and throw a series of purple immobilizing knives in your direction. These bounce right back at her, causing her to stand still while you get an opportunity to unload magic attacks on her. The safest way to defeat her is to block, block, block!

GENMA RANMARU MORI

SAMANOSUKE Hasn't this guy had enough? Don't look for anything new in this final battle with Ranmaru except for increased strength and health. Maintain your previous game plan and watch him die for good.

NOBUNAGA

JACQUES This is the last fight in which magic is concerned, so don't hold back. As Nobunaga comes in for an attack, swiftly sidestep the attack and counter with magic or a hard-hitting combo. Use the fireflies above the ground to dodge oncoming attacks and to quickly move from harm's way.

NOBUNAGA II

SAMANOSUKE Sam's first crack at Nobunaga is a cinch—just unload magic attacks until he falls at your feet and whisks you away to fight on his own ground.

Once the real battle begins, it's more about dodging attacks from his protective orbs than attacking. His attacks are all avoided pretty easily once you recognize each one. You can sidestep laser attacks by alternating your walking direction, and you can outrun slow-moving blue orbs. Keep your distance from Nobunaga when dodging attacks, attacking only when the orbs are closed. Use magic as your main attack while fighting Nobunaga.

Attack the closed orbs until the set is destroyed and repeat for the second set that appears. When Nobunaga is no longer protected, he will throw tornado, fire, and lightning attacks at you. Sidestep and avoid these attacks, jetting in for an attack between them. When he has had enough, Nobunaga will drop his sword. Quickly absorb the sword as you would souls, taking away Nobunaga's dangerous asset. Now it is a matter of finishing off the giant with a few more attacks while sidestepping his final efforts. «

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Funkmaster Flex's Digital Hitz Factory	XS Games	●●●●	76
Fur Fighters: Viggo's Revenge	Acclaim	●●●	46
Futurama	Vivendi Universal	●●◖	72
Future Tactics: The Uprising	Crave	●●●◖	81
G1 Jockey 3	Koei	●●●◖	69
Gadget Racers	Conspiracy	●●●◖	50
Galerians: Ash	Sammy	●◖	66
Gallop Racer	Tecmo	●●	48
Gallop Racer 2003: A New Breed	Tecmo	●●●	69
Gauntlet: Dark Legacy	Midway	●●●◖	46
The Getaway	Sony CEA	●●●●	66
Giants: Citizen Kabuto	Interplay	●●●◖	51
Gitaroo-Man	Koei	●●●◖	53
Gladiator: Sword of Vengeance	Acclaim	●●	75
Gladius	LucasArts	●●●●	74
Goblin Commander: Unleash the Horde	Jaleco	●●◖	76
Godai: Elemental Force	3DO	●◖	54
Gradius III and IV	Konami	●●◖	39
Gran Turismo 3: A-spec	**Sony CEA**	**●●●●●**	**46**
Grand Prix Challenge	Atari	●●●◖	68
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City	**Rockstar**	**●●●●●**	**63**
Grand Theft Auto III	**Rockstar**	**●●●●●**	**52**
Grandia II	Ubisoft	●●●◖	53
Grandia Xtreme	Enix	●●●◖	62
Gravity Games Bike: Street, Vert, Dirt	Midway	◖	61
The Great Escape	Gotham Games	●●●◖	72
GTC Africa	Majesco	●●◖	58
Guilty Gear X	Majesco/Sammy	●●●●	51
Guilty Gear X2	Sammy	●●●●	66
Gungrave	Sega	●●●◖	61
Gungriffon Blaze	Working Designs	●●●◖	39
Half-Life	**Sierra**	**●●●●●**	**51**
Harry Potter: Quidditch World Cup	EA Games	●●●	75
Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	EA Games	●●●◖	64
Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone	EA Games	●◖	76
Harvest Moon: Save the Homeland	Natsume	●●●●	51
Haunted Mansion	TDK	●●●	77
Haven: Call of the King	Midway	●●●◖	64
Headhunter	Acclaim	●●●	57
Herdy Gerdy	Eidos	●●●	56
Heroes of Might and Magic	3DO	●●◖	46
Hidden Invasion	Conspiracy	●●●	60
High Heat MLB 2002	3DO	●●●●	44
High Heat MLB 2003	3DO	●●●●◖	55
High Heat MLB 2004	**3DO**	**●●●●●**	**67**
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin	**Eidos**	**●●●●◖**	**63**
Hitman: Contracts	Eidos	●●●●◖	81

LEVEL SELECT

Make the hit on any level with this cheat. No waiting, no preparation, all action. At the Main menu, press ⊗, △, ○, ←, ↑, →, L2, R2

YOU'RE A SILENT ASSASSIN

Turn to page 104 for Prima's tips on becoming a true professional.

The Hobbit	Vivendi Universal	●●●◖	76
Hot Shots Golf 3	**Sony CEA**	**●●●●**	**55**
Hot Wheels: Velocity X	THQ	●●◖	64
The Hulk	Vivendi Universal	●●●●	70
Hunter: The Reckoning–Wayward	Interplay	●●◖	72
Hypersonic Xtreme	Majesco	●●◖	67
I-Ninja	Namco	●●●◖	75
Ico	**Sony CEA**	**●●●●●**	**50**
Indiana Jones and the Emperor's Tomb	LucasArts	●●●	71
Indy Car Series	Codemasters	●●●	71
Intellivision Lives!	Crave	●●●◖	77
Island Extreme Stunts	EA Games	●●●◖	65
The Italian Job	Eidos	●●	72
Jade Cocoon 2	Ubisoft	●●●◖	53
Jak and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy	**Sony CEA**	**●●●●●**	**52**
Jak II	Sony CEA	●●●◖	74
James Bond 007: Agent Under Fire	**EA Games**	**●●●●**	**52**
James Bond 007: Everything or Nothing	EA Games	●●●●◖	79
James Bond 007: NightFire	Activision	●●●●◖	64
James Cameron's Dark Angel	Sierra	●●	65
Jeopardy!	Atari	●●◖	77
Jeremy McGrath Supercross World	Acclaim	●	53
Jet X20	Sony CEA	●●	63
Jonny Moseley Mad Trix	3DO	●◖	54
Judge Dredd: Dredd vs. Death	Evolved Games	●●◖	80
The Jungle Book: Rhythm n' Groove	Ubisoft	●●●	69
Jurassic Park: Operation Genesis	Universal Int.	●●●●◖	68

ONIMUSHA 3 DEMON SIEGE

ALL BOSS FIGHTS AND SLIDING PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

BRAINSTERN

SAMANOSUKE This large mechanical bucket of firepower has three main attacks. The first is a long-range machine gun attack. As he fires, quickly raise your sword to block or sidestep the assault and move in closer to avoid another attack. Brainstern's second attack is a series of missiles fired into the air. These are easily avoided by moving away from the dark shadows they cast. The third attack is a spinning attack most often used when Samanosuke is in close range. Like with the others, keep up your guard until the attack winds down and you can counter. Begin your attacks on Brainstern's mammoth arms until they're destroyed and then concentrate your attacks on the large body until the metallic beast falls.

You can expect to run into Brainstern again atop the Eiffel Tower. Treat him the same way as you did during this encounter.

MARCELLUS

JACQUES If you know *Onimusha*, you know Marcellus—and you know that you have to destroy his shield before you can get to him. See that firefly in the middle of the room? You'll need to use it, both to work your way out of being trapped in the corner and to give yourself a lift when Marcellus prepares to unleash an energy attack—watch his sword to get the timing right.

RANMARU MORI (SECOND ENCOUNTER)

SAMANOSUKE Keep up your guard through most of Ranmaru's attacks. He's much faster now and harder to hit, but countering his attacks or catching him with a critical hit as he is about to strike will take the spring out of his step. Once he's hit, he will release a handful of souls—strike him with a magic attack or a vicious combo as he attempts to collect the lost souls. Often, the Genma warrior will yell and fire a green ball in your direction. Simply block the attack and return to the offensive. Continue this pattern, and Ranmaru will once again fall to Samanosuke's sword.

GERTRUDE

JACQUES The object here is to destroy Gertrude's right head with the golden helmet before it destroys you. For a quick battle, charge your whip, take hold of the ring on the nose of the head, and unload magic attacks.

The left head of the beast emits a shower of ice, freezing Jacques in his place, while the right head emits a magic attack of lightning. Avoid both by sidestepping the creature and remaining at the beast's sides and back end. Remember to use those fireflies as a means of escape if you get into trouble. Oh, and keeping a distance from Gertrude will result in a mad charge by the enormous two-headed creature. Sidestep and counter accordingly.

GUILDENSTERN

SAMANOSUKE Guildenstern conjures up nerofoboras to help do his bidding. The best way to deal with these creatures is to sidestep their blue orb attacks and attack them while Guidenstern is high out of reach and impenetrable. Don't worry about making sure they stay dead—they'll be raised multiple times throughout your battle. If you are confident in your skills, quickly dispatch these creatures with critical attacks.

The only time to inflict damage on Guildenstern is when his chest glows red. Attack quickly—if he floats down to ground level, quickly use a charged attack on his glowing chest, canceling out his casting if no nerofoboras are present. Should he be in the air when his chest glows, stop what you are doing and fire an electric arrow into his chest.

HEIHACHI (SECOND ENCOUNTER)

JACQUES Keep up your defenses as the swift attacks come from Heihachi's spear. Getting in an attack of your own can be very difficult this time around, so concentrate on sidestepping and countering attacks. Once you have initiated an attack that is connecting, release a magical attack to help speed things along.

GERTRUDE (SECOND ENCOUNTER)

SAMANOSUKE The second encounter with Gertrude is a much more lengthy and difficult battle. Samanosuke must play the role of matador as the beast charges back and forth across the screen until the fight is over. In addition to unmasking the right head as in the earlier battle, you must fight the creature until all its armor is removed and both heads are exposed. This can be a long, grueling battle, but have patience.

Like with your first encounter, expect Gertrude to freeze you with its left head and emit lightning attacks from its right. Keep your distance between and sidestep the charging attacks, countering with a charged weapon like the hard-hitting chigo. Gertrude may unveil a counter of its own by raising up on its back legs and stomping down on top of Sam—stay clear!

Once the heads are exposed, enter into Oni form (if available) or begin your magic attacks.

VEGA DONNA

JACQUES The Genma queen is a surprisingly harmless battle if you can keep your guard up at













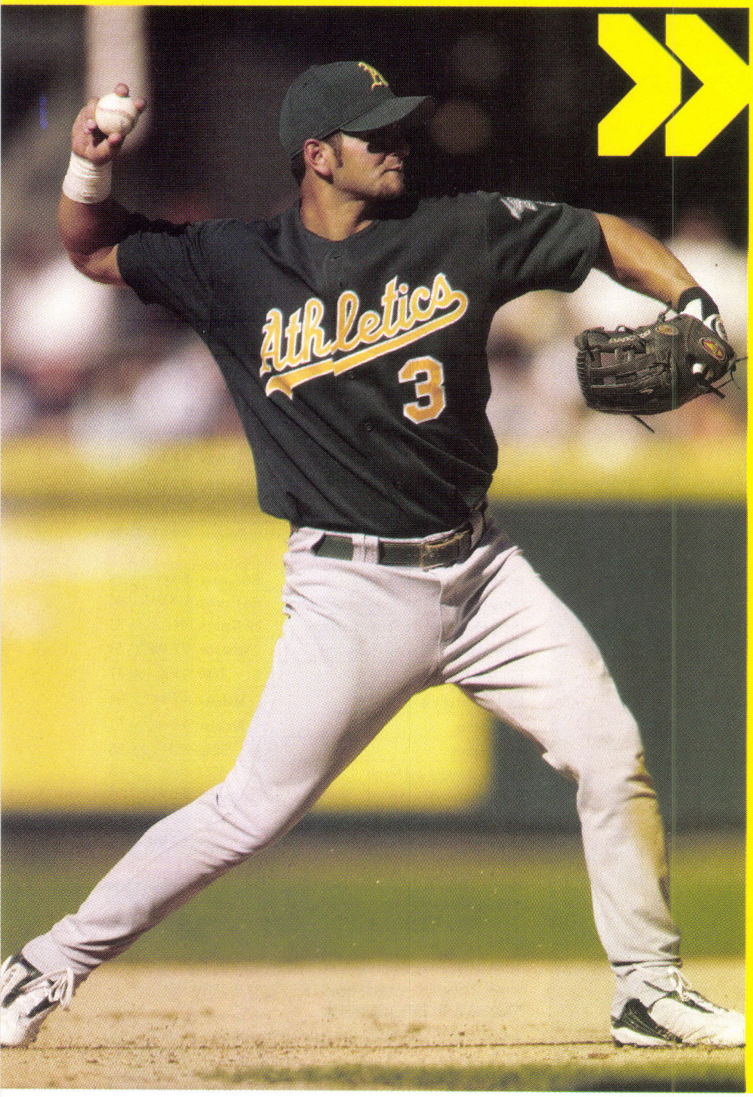


SOUND STATION

by John Scalzi



MUSIC FROM THE MLB 2005 SOUNDTRACK



ALIEN ANT FARM: *TRUANT*



I like Alien Ant Farm because they do the heavy guitar sound that's so popular with kids these days, yet they don't come across as miserable, whiny bastards. They've got a light edge and an interest in the melodic side of music that keeps me listening without the rampaging urge to smack them around. And they make an effort to change up the sound from track to track. At the same time, however, they're not exactly spitting out classic songs here on *TruANT*, just a collection of agreeably chunky tunes you'll nod along to and forget right afterward. So they're good but disposable—there are worse things in the world to be.

●●●○○

BLACK EYED PEAS: *ELEPHUNK*



There's something to be said about any band that can exhort its listeners with the command "Let's get retarded" and actually make it sound like a good idea. Let me just whack myself with this here rubber mallet. *Whack!* Yes, that's *ever* so much better. The basic rap on *Elephunk* is that it's not on the level of *Bridging the Gap*, but I don't agree. I like the addition of female member Fergie (I particularly enjoy the delightfully hostile rap-disco mash-up "Shut Up") and that the Peas are all over the board, getting it together with both Papa Roach and Justin Timberlake. There's something for everyone here—which means that it's not all going to work for any one person. Is this a problem? Not for me.

●●●●○

JET: *GET BORN*



Jet is the favorite new band of the genially middle-aged former rocker who biweekly delivers meats and ice cream to my door, and listening to *Get Born* makes it easy to see why. Here are four Aussie lads who digested the Mick Taylor era of the Rolling Stones whole, followed it up with a dessert of Wings-era Paul McCartney and a teeny after-dinner mint of AC/DC, and then belched up this album as a tribute to the entire meal. Perhaps comparing an album to a gastric event is not always considered a positive thing, but you know, in some cultures, burping after a meal is meant as a compliment. This is a nicely sustained belch.

●●●◐○

NICKELBACK: *THE LONG ROAD*



Nickelback is a band that proves competence and tenacity (which they have) often gets you as far as brain-blistering talent (which they don't have). This band is like the Night Ranger or Candlebox-ish arena monsters of yesteryear: They write decent songs in tune with the prevailing rock trends, hit their desired demographic of rock-tinged young men, and then sell, sell, *sell*, baby, willing success through sheer effort. I can totally respect the work ethic involved and can even grant that their songs do what they're supposed to. They're *just* good enough if the band puts its back into touring. Don't think Nickelback doesn't know that. They didn't call the album *The Long Road* for nothing.

●●●○○

PILLAR: *FIREPROOF*



I have to say that if there's one section of music that's dramatically improved since I was a kid, it's contemporary Christian rock. Back in my day, you had Stryper (which sucked) and then absolutely nothing else except a stratum of musicians so out of touch with pop culture that they deserved the ghettoized status they were stuck with. Today's Christ-like kids, on the other hand, have bands like Pillar that are in sync with what's going on in the rest of the musical world and blast out nu-metal sounds that aren't terribly distinctive—but also won't get you marked as the kid most likely to get beat up after school. That's progress.

●●●○○

FORGOTTEN GEMS

CELEBRATING THE OVERLOOKED AND UNDERRATED

SMUGGLER'S RUN

Publisher	Rockstar
Developer	Angel Studios
ESRB	Teen
Released	October 2000
Score	●●●●◐
Cost	$10

Most of the time, when you load up an old game that you remember being very cutting edge, you're surprised by how dated it looks. Technology that was once all shiny and new can look awfully simplistic three and a half years later.

And then there are those games that look every bit as good as they did the day you first picked them up. *Smuggler's Run* is just such a game. With its staggeringly vast field of view and its surprising level of detail, *Smuggler's Run* wears its age astonishingly well.

The gameplay holds up just as admirably. The arcadey, pick-up-and-drop-off simplicity of the game makes it one of those ideal no-brainer experiences—that is, no brain required. You dash around these enormous levels, snagging pieces of contraband and depositing them at predetermined locations. It's not as easy as following the big green arrow at the top of the screen, though. You'll always have the border patrol after you, and many of the missions throw in rival gangs who can steal your cargo by knocking into you.

Things can get pretty brutal as you get into the later stages of the game, when the cops seem to develop supernatural powers of observation and navigation, but that's part of the fun (as is running down innocent bystanders and woodland creatures—don't worry, they all get up eventually).

Smuggler's Run was a showcase game when PS2 launched, and you can still see why today.





GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
K-1 World Grand Prix	Konami	●●	71
Karaoke Revolution	Konami	●●●●	75
Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer	Activision	●●●◖	61
Kengo: Master of Bushido	Crave	●●●	42
Kessen	EA Games	●●●	39
Kessen II	Koei	●●●	51
kill.switch	Namco	●●●●◖	75
Kinetica	Sony CEA	●●●●◖	50
The King of Fighters 2000/2001	Bandai	●●◖	76
The King of Route 66	Sega	●●●	67
King's Field: The Ancient City	Agetec	●●	55
Kingdom Hearts	Square EA	●●●●◖	61
Klonoa 2: Lunatea's Veil	Namco	●●●●◖	47
Knockout Kings 2001	EA Sports	●●●●	42
Knockout Kings 2002	EA Sports	●●●●	55
Kya: Dark Lineage	Atari	●●◖	76
La Pucelle: Tactics	Mastiff	●●●●	81
Le Mans 24 Hours	Infogrames	●●◖	48
Legacy of Kain: Defiance	Eidos	●●◖	76
Legaia 2: Duel Saga	Fresh Games	●●●	63
The Legend of Alon D'ar	Ubisoft	●◖	54
Legends of Wrestling	Acclaim	●●◖	53
Legends of Wrestling II	Acclaim	●●●	65
Legion: The Legend of Excalibur	Midway	●●●	59
Lego Racers 2	Lego Media	●●◖	51
Lethal Skies	Sammy	●●●	58
Lethal Skies II	Sammy	●●●◖	74
Looney Tunes: Back in Action	EA Games	●	76
The Lord of the Rings: Fellowship of the Ring	Black Label	●●●◖	63
The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers	EA Games	●●●●◖	63
⚡The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King	EA Games	●●●●●	75
Lowrider	Jaleco	●◖	77
Lupin the 3rd: Treasure of the Sorcerer King	Bandai	●●●◖	78
Mace Griffin Bounty Hunter	Vivendi Universal	●●	71
Mad Maestro!	Eidos/Fresh	●●●	56
Madden NFL 2001	EA Sports	●●●●◖	38
Madden NFL 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◖	48
⚡Madden NFL 2003	EA Sports	●●●●●	60
⚡Madden NFL 2004	EA Sports	●●●●●	72
Mafia	Gathering	●●●◖	79
Magic Pengel: The Quest for Color	Agetec	●●●●	69
Manhunt	Rockstar	●●●◖	76
The Mark of Kri	Sony CEA	●●●	59
Marvel vs. Capcom 2	Capcom	●●●●	61
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2	Activision	●●●●	60
Max Payne	Rockstar	●●●●	53
Max Payne 2: The Fall of Max Payne	Rockstar	●●●◖	77
Maximo: Ghosts to Glory	Capcom	●●●◖	54
Maximo vs. Army of Zin	Capcom	●●●●	77
MDK2 Armageddon	Interplay	●●●◖	45
Medal of Honor: Frontline	EA Games	●●●●●	58
⚡Medal of Honor: Rising Sun	EA Games	●●●◖	76
Mega Man X7	Capcom	●●●◖	74
Men in Black II: Alien Escape	Infogrames	●●◖	60
Metal Arms: Glitch in the System	Vivendi Universal	●●●●	75
Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty	Konami	●●●●●	51
Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance	Konami	●●●●●	67
Metropolismania	Natsume	●●●	61
Midnight Club	Rockstar	●●●●	39
⚡Midnight Club II	Rockstar	●●●●●	67
Midway Arcade Treasures	Midway	●●●◖	76
Mike Tyson Heavyweight Boxing	Codemasters	●	58
Minority Report	Activision	●●◖	65
Mission: Impossible–Operation Surma	Atari	●●	77
Mister Mosquito	Eidos/Fresh	●●●◖	56
MLB 2004	Sony CEA	●●●	67
⚡MLB 2005	Sony CEA	●●●◖	80

D-PAD VS. ANALOG

When lacing up the cleats in *MLB 2005*, don't shy away from using the PS2 controller's left analog stick to control your defensive movement and swing. Compared with the directional pad, the analog stick gives you a better feel for laying bunts down the base lines (stick about halfway left or right), slapping line drives back up the middle (stick just below center in middle), and hitting ground balls to the opposite field (stick away and down). 989 Sports put out a great simulation of MLB action, so yourapproach will need to be more strategic than it's been in classic swing-away button mashers of the past.

MLB Slugfest 20-03	Midway	●●●●	59
MLB Slugfest 20-04	Midway	●●●●	67



MAKING MUSIC

"Looking for a music creation tool with a bit more depth than this month's *MTV Music Generator 3*? Check out the extremely solid—and very user-friendly—*Music Maker*."
Joe Rybicki



MADDEN 2005

Jonesing to see what the future holds for NFL videogaming's longest-running dynasty? Check last month's issue page 46 for an exclusive first look at *Madden 2005*. Or check out next month's cover story for all the details.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Mobile Light Force 2	XS Games	●●●◖	69
Mobile Suit Gundam: Encounters in Space	Bandai	●	75
Mobile Suit Gundam: Federation vs. Zeon	Bandai	●●●◖	61
Mobile Suit Gundam: Journey to Jaburo	Bandai	●	48
Mobile Suit Gundam: Zeonic Front	Bandai	●●●	54
Mojo!	Crave	●●◖	73
Monopoly Party	Infogrames	●●●	65
Monster 4x4: Masters of Metal	Ubisoft	●●◖	77
Monster Rancher 3	Tecmo	●●●●	50
Monster Rancher 4	Tecmo	●●●◖	75
Monsters, Inc.	Sony CEA	●●●◖	55
Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance	Midway	●●●●	64
MotoGP	Namco	●●●●	39
MotoGP2	Namco	●●●●◖	53
MotoGP3	Namco	●●●●◖	67
Motor Mayhem	Infogrames	●●●	47
MTV Music Generator 2	Codemasters	●●●	46
MTV's Celebrity Deathmatch	Gotham Games	●◖	76
⚡MTX: Mototrax	Activision	●●◖	80
The Mummy Returns	Universal	●◖	52
Music Maker	Magix	●●●●	69
MVP Baseball 2003	EA Sports	●●●◖	67
⚡MVP Baseball 2004	EA Sports	●●●●◖	80

WORST BASEBALL PLAYER EVER

Create a new character with the name Erik Kiss.

MX 2002 Featuring Ricky Carmichael	THQ	●●●●	47
MX Rider	Infogrames	●●●◖	52
MX Superfly Featuring Ricky Carmichael	THQ	●●●◖	59
⚡My Street	Sony CEA	●●●	67
Myst III: Exile	Ubisoft	●●●◖	63
Mystic Heroes	Koei	●●◖	64
MX Unleashed	THQ	●●●	79

Enter these codes in the Cheat menu.

UNLOCKABLE	CODE
500cc bikes	BIGDOGS
50cc bikes	SQUIRRELDOG
A.I. bowling	WRECKINGBALL
Career completion	CLAPPEDOUT
Expert A.I.	OBTGOFAST
Freestyle tracks	BUSTBIG
National tracks	ECONATION
Pro physics	SWAPPIN
Supercross tracks	STUPERCROSS
Unlock all vehicles	MINIGAMES



Namco Museum	Namco	●●●◖	53
NASCAR 2001	EA Sports	●●◖	40
NASCAR Heat	Infogrames	●●●●	47
NASCAR Thunder 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◖	51
NASCAR Thunder 2003	EA Sports	●●●●◖	62
⚡NASCAR Thunder 2004	EA Sports	●●●●●	73
NASCAR: Dirt to Daytona	Infogrames	●●●◖	63
Naval Ops: Warship Gunner	Koei	●●●	71
NBA 2K2	Sega Sports	●●●●●	53
⚡NBA 2K3	Sega Sports	●●●●●	63
NBA Ballers	Midway Sports	●●●●	80

ROLL LIKE THE PROS DO

With these, you'll be mixing beats in A.I.'s studio and wearing Kobe's alternate outfit (no, not the orange jumpsuit—maybe in *Ballers 2*?). Enter these codes under the Phrase-ology menu.

UNLOCKABLE	CODE
Allen Iverson's alternate gear	killer crossover
Allen Iverson's Studio	the answer
Alonzo Mourning	zo
Amare Stoudemire	rising sun
Baron Davis	Stylin & Profilin
Ben Wallace's alternate gear	radio controlled cars

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE



Bill Russell	celtics dynasty
Bill Walton	towers of power
Chris Webber	24 seconds
Clyde Drexler	clyde the glide
Darryl Dawkins	rim wrecker
Dikembe Mutombo	in the paint
Dominique Wilkins	dunk fest
Elton Brand	rebound
George Gervin	the ice man cometh
Jalen Rose	bring it
Jason Kidd	pass the rock
Jason Williams	give and go
Jerry Stackhouse's alternate gear	Stop Drop and Roll
John Stockton	court vision
Julius Erving	one on one
Karl Malone	special delivery
Karl Malone's Devonshire estate	ice house
Kevin Garnett's alternate gear	boss hoss
Kevin McHale	holla back
Kobe Bryant's alternate gear	Japanese steak
Larry Bird	hoosier
Latrell Sprewell	spree
Lebron James	king james
Magic Johnson	laker legends
Manu Ginobili's alternate gear	manu
Michael Finley	student of the game

NBA Hoopz	Midway	●●●	44
NBA Jam 2004	Acclaim	●●◖	75
NBA Live 2001	EA Sports	●●●	42
NBA Live 2002	EA Sports	●●◖	51
⚡NBA Live 2003	EA Sports	●●●●	63
⚡NBA Live 2004	EA Sports	●●●●◖	75
NBA ShootOut 2001	Sony CEA	●●◖	44
NBA ShootOut 2003	Sony CEA	●●●	63
⚡NBA ShootOut 2004	Sony CEA	●●●	75
NBA Starting Five	Konami	●●◖	63
NBA Street	EA Sports Big	●●●●●	47
NBA Street Vol. 2	EA Sports Big	●●●●●	68
⚡NCAA College Basketball 2K3	Sega Sports	●●●●	64
NCAA College Football 2K3	Sega Sports	●●◖	60
NCAA Final Four 2001	Sony CEA	●	41
NCAA Final Four 2002	Sony CEA	●◖	52
NCAA Final Four 2003	Sony CEA	●●◖	64
⚡NCAA Final Four 2004	Sony CEA	●●	76
NCAA Football 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◖	48
⚡NCAA Football 2003	EA Sports	●●●●●	60
⚡NCAA Football 2004	EA Sports	●●●●●	71
NCAA GameBreaker 2001	Sony CEA	●◖	41
NCAA GameBreaker 2003	Sony CEA	●●	61
⚡NCAA GameBreaker 2004	Sony CEA	●●◖	73
NCAA March Madness 2002	EA Sports	●●●	53
NCAA March Madness 2003	EA Sports	●●●	64
⚡NCAA March Madness 2004	EA Sports	●●●●	76
Need for Speed: Hot Pursuit 2	EA Games	●●●●●	62
⚡Need for Speed Underground	EA Games	●●●●◖	76

We like the cars, the cars that go vroom. Race anywhere you want without all that pesky unlocking business. Enter these codes at the Main menu.

UNLOCKABLE	CODE
All circuit tracks	⬇, R1, R1, R1, R2, R2, R2, □
All drag tracks	➡, □, ⬅, R1, □, L1, L2, R2
All drift tracks	⬅, ⬅, ⬅, ⬅, ➡, R2, R1, L2
All sprint tracks	⬆, R2, R2, R2, R1, ⬇, ⬇, ⬇
Drift physics in all modes	R1, ⬆, ⬆, ⬆, ⬇, ⬇, ⬇, L1

NFL 2K2	Sega Sports	●●●◖	52
⚡NFL 2K3	Sega Sports	●●●●◖	60

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
NFL Blitz 20-02	Midway	●●●●	55
NFL Blitz 20-03	Midway	●●●◖	60
⚡NFL Blitz Pro	Midway Sports	●●●	74
NFL GameDay 2001	Sony CEA	●	40
NFL GameDay 2002	Sony CEA	●◖	53
⚡NFL GameDay 2003	Sony CEA	●●◖	61
⚡NFL GameDay 2004	Sony CEA	●●●	73
NFL Quarterback Club 2001	Acclaim	●●◖	50
⚡NFL Street	EA Sports Big	●●●●◖	78
NHL 2001	EA Sports	●●●●	38
NHL 2002	EA Sports	●●●●◖	50
NHL 2003	EA Sports	●●●◖	63
⚡NHL 2004	EA Sports	●●●●	73
NHL 2K3	Sega Sports	●●●●●	64
NHL FaceOff 2001	Sony CEA	●●●◖	43
NHL FaceOff 2003	Sony CEA	●●	64
NHL Hitz 20-02	Midway	●●●●	51
NHL Hitz 20-03	Midway	●●●●◖	62
⚡NHL Hitz Pro	Midway	●●●●	73
Ninja Assault	Namco	●●◖	61
No One Lives Forever	Sierra	●●●◖	56
Okage: Shadow King	Sony CEA	●●●	51
Oni	Rockstar	●◖	43
Onimusha: Warlords	Capcom	●●●●	43
Onimusha 2: Samurai's Destiny	Capcom	●●●●	60
Onimusha 3: Demon Siege	Capcom	●●●●◖	81

HOWDY, PARTNER!

Battle as a cowboy warrior or dressed as a panda. We miss you, Ling Ling!

UNLOCKABLES

- **Samanosuke's special Western outfit**

  When playing as Samanosuke (versus Jacques), complete the game with a higher ending game point score for Samanosuke or finish the game with Jacques' Western outfit.
- **Samanosuke's panda suit**

  Complete the Oni Training minigame, or have an *Onimusha Blade Warriors* save on your memory card. For added fun, press the L2 button to flip the head on and off with different expressions each time.
- **Jacques' special Western outfit**

  When playing as Jacques (versus Samanosuke), complete the game with a higher ending game point score for Jacques or finish the game with Samanosuke's special outfit.
- **Michelle's wet bathroom look**

  Complete the game with an S ranking on Normal or higher difficulty.



Orphen: Scion of Sorcery	Activision	●●●	39
Pac-Man Fever	Namco	●●	60
Pac-Man World 2	Namco	●●●●◖	54
PaRappa the Rapper 2	Sony CEA	●●●◖	53
Paris-Dakar Rally	Acclaim	●●	53
Pirates: The Legend of Black Kat	EA Games	●●●◖	55
Pitfall: The Lost Expedition	Activision	●●	80
Portal Runner	3DO	●●	50
The Powerpuff Girls: Relish Rampage	Bam	●●	65
Pride FC	THQ	●●●●	65
Primal	Sony CEA	●●●●	68
Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time	Ubisoft	●●●●●	75
Pro Race Driver	Codemasters	●●●●◖	65
Project Eden	Eidos	●●●◖	52
Pryzm Chapter One: The Dark Unicorn	TDK Mediactive	●●◖	60
P.T.O. IV	Koei	●●●	66
Q-Ball Billiards Master	Take-Two	●●●◖	40
Quake III Revolution	EA Games	●●●●◖	44
R: Racing Evolution	Namco	●●●●	76
R-Type Final	Eidos/Fresh Games	●●●●	78
Rally Fusion: Race of Champions	Activision	●●●	64

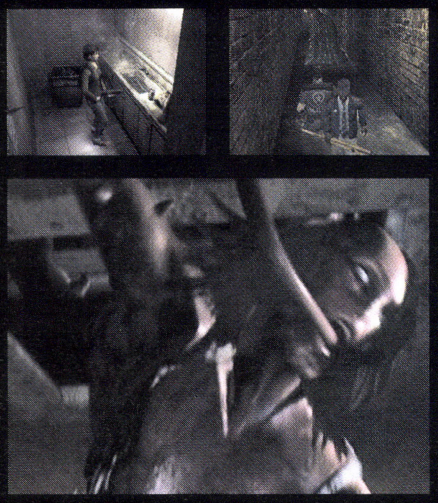
RESIDENT EVIL OUTBREAK

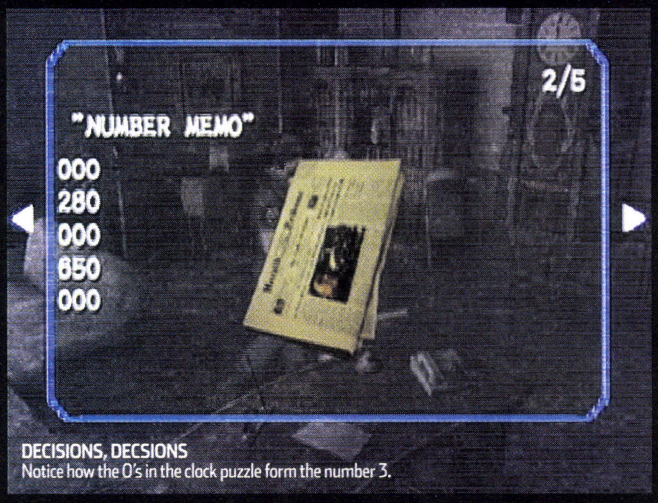
SCENARIO WALKTHROUGHS



Whether using security guard Ving Rhames (no wait, we mean Mark) or Tom Cruise the police officer (sorry, that's Kevin), you'll find plenty of bizarrely illogical gameplay elements to solve during your Raccoon City meltdown excursions. Fortunately, we're here to provide the Heimlich maneuver for all the game's notorious choke points.







DECISIONS, DECSIONS
Notice how the 0's in the clock puzzle form the number 3.

OUTBREAK

FORKLIFT Find the forklift key in the 3F wine room. Bring it to the forklift and use it, then pull the lever on the forklift to raise the crates.

ROOFTOP GATE On the roof, across from the storage room, find a bent section of chain link. Unequip your weapon and use Tackle to break down the gate. Then climb up onto the walkway.

FUEL TANKER Grab the cop's lighter (if you don't have one). Release the tanker's red valve handle. When it's clear, use the lighter to torch the undead.

DETONATOR The first detonator part is near a cop's body to the right, under a lamppost. The second part is to the left, surrounded by zombies. Use a shotgun to clear the area, combine the parts, then approach the other cop's body in the center of the street. Use the detonator to fire off the explosives.

BELOW FREEZING POINT

CREATING V-JOLT In the B7F chemical disposal room, find the UMB No. 3 in the red-lit chamber. Go to the B7F chemical-storage room and find the computer. Enter the code (either 4509, 0634, or 9741) to open the rack and get the VP-017. Combine the two items to make V-Jolt.

THAWING THE WRENCH Get the frozen wrench in the B6F south passage. Bring it to the B6F break room and put it in the sink to thaw it.

B5F COMPUTER ROOM CODES In the B6F security center, enter A375, C582, or J126.

B4F SHUTTER CODES In the B6F security center, enter A194, B482, or D580.

WARMING UP B4F Enter the B4F culture room (you must open the shutter from B6F and register your fingerprint on B5F; Yoko doesn't need to register) and get the blowtorch. Enter the B5F low-temperature laboratory and use the blowtorch on the frozen lever.

G-MUTANT In the marshaling yard, head away from the front of the train to a dead end with supplies. Fire at the G-Mutant from there until it comes close. Dodge around it and bolt to the second control panel on the side of the train (the opposite side from the control panel used to raise the train). Use it to send the train into the G-Mutant. This may not kill it instantly. Use weapons to finish the job or wait for the train to reset.

THE HIVE

ELEVATOR CODE 1 The first passcode is 0930, which is the date of the daughter's birthday you find on the desk in the doctor station. Elevator codes should be entered in the B1F elevator control room.

ELEVATOR CODE 2 Grab the chemical code message from the leech cabinet in the 2F nurses' station. Read the Carmine number (1210). Get the piece of memo from the 1F office and add the red chemical code number to the Carmine number.

DEFEAT LEECH MAN Get to the B2F fixed-temperature room with a blood-infusion pack in your inventory. Wait for Leech Man to appear. Place the blood in the larger room and then move to the control panel and set the controls on high.

DEFEAT GIANT LEECH Lure the giant leech forward until it is under a ceiling valve. Aim up and fire at the valve to dump hot water on the monster. On the narrow bridge, fire at the tank to make it blow up (make sure the giant leech is near it and you are far away). Repeat the valve trick until the creature falls. You need to be near the creature to make it follow you. Anger it with a few shots to get it moving.

HELLFIRE

THE LEDGE If you find yourself in northwest passage No. 3, climb through the open window to the fire escape. Then press the Action button next to the broken rail to move onto the ledge. Walk around the ledge to another platform.

OWNER'S ROOM BOX In the 2F owner's room, push the wooden crate through the hole burned in the floor. Jump down onto the crate below.

ROOM 101 WALL SAFE Find the "hotel charge breakdown" memo in the room. The code will be different depending on the guest's name.
Mr. Andrew Evans: JIA; Ms. Anna Lowell: BAE; Mr. Toby Whitman: GF; Mr. Joseph Wilson: DCH

THE MAP PUZZLE Find room 204 and view the lit map. Mark down the number of the squares that are dark. You must flip the appropriate switches in other rooms of the hotel and then return to room 204 to get the key.
Switch for No. 1: Room 102; Switch for No. 2: Room 103; Switch for No. 3: Room 104; Switch for No. 4: Room 202

2F SECURITY OFFICE CODES To enter the security office, enter 0721, 2287, 5128, or 6354.

THE RED JEWEL To get the red jewel, use the silver relief key to open room 306. Find the jewel in a tree statue near the bed. Bring it to the security office. Push the bookcase and then place the jewel in the bust to open a secret door.

SUSPEND-DEAD To begin, press the alarm bell on the front desk—this disables the roaming lickers. Concentrate fire on the hanging boss and pay attention when it begins to shriek and thrash around. This means it is about to attack, so run away until it has finished. Keep firing until the creature dies.

UNLOCKABLE COUTURE

- **Alyssa's red dress**
  Collect: Alyssa's red dress, stiletto heels, red lipstick
- **Alyssa's street-scene outfit**
  Collect: Alyssa's sportswear top, sportswear bottom, sport shoes, women's sunglasses
- **Cindy's bunny costume**
  Collect: Cindy's bunny cuffs, bunny bow tie, sexy lipstick, fishnet tights, bunny ears, high heels, and bunny suit
- **David's "urban Zironi" costume**
  Collect: David's leather pants, lapel shirt, leather jacket, boots, and masculine pendant
- **George's true tenderness costume**
  Collect: George's cargo pants, sport sunglasses, brown inner wear, outdoor shoes, and yellow raincoat
- **Jim's basketball star costume**
  Collect: Jim's white tank top, rare basketball shoe, favorite uniform, wide shorts, and autographed ball
- **Kevin's lucky cowboy costume**
  Collect: Kevin's Western boots, white T-shirt, wrinkled cigarettes, faded blue jeans, leather belt, and cowboy hat
- **Mark's sandals father costume**
  Collect: Mark's brown belt, shorts, polo shirt, and sneakers

DECISIONS, DECISIONS

BLUE GEM In the president's room, examine the fireplace and pull one of the cords. Pull the red one on normal, the blue on easy. Go to the art gallery and get the blue gem from the statue's hand. Or simply have Cindy play the piano.

CLOCK PUZZLE In the general manager's office, press the button under the picture on the wall. Then set the hands of the clock to the appropriate time. On the last page of the number memo, you'll see something like this: "Hour: 47 Minute: 98." So, in the example above, remove all the numbers that aren't 0 on the first page of the memo. What's left will be a group of 0's in the shape of the number you need.

USE ANTIVIRUS PILLS Every time you find an antivirus pill, make sure you or one of your characters takes it. Take turns so they don't die off.

HOW TO GET P-BASE Don't use the container in the room with the P-Base machine. Get to the water tank and release the electronic lock. Then get to the water tank from the water-purification facility and find the sealed container in the control room. Load it up with P-Base.

T-BLOOD AND DAYLIGHT Lure Thanatos into 1F passage B. Zap him with the exposed electric cables and he'll faint. Grab the T-Blood, run to the elevator, and go to 3F. Once there, load P-Base, T-Blood, and V-Poison into the reagent incubator. Move to second hall to see a cut-scene, then use the computers to turn the incubator power back on. Give the Daylight antitoxin to all your characters and use it yourself, then grab two more.

DEFEAT THANATOS Slug it out with him at the scaffolding. (You can take him out with one shot using the rocket launcher found in the shed.) When he falls, move through the next door until you reach the front square, then run to the tank in the garage. Grab the ampoule shooter and load Daylight into it. Shoot Thanatos with it to bring him down quickly or just use weapons. «

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Ratchet & Clank	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**63**
Ratchet & Clank: Going Commando	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**75**
Rayman 2: Revolution	**Ubisoft**	●●●●●	**41**
Rayman 3: Hoodlum Havoc	Ubisoft	●●●◖	67
Rayman Arena	Ubisoft	●●●◖	57
RC Revenge Pro	Acclaim	●●◖	41
Ready 2 Rumble Boxing Round 2	Midway	●●●●	40
Real Pool	Infogrames	●●●◖	40
Red Card Soccer 20-03	Midway	●●●	57
Red Faction	**THQ**	●●●●●	**46**
Red Faction II	THQ	●●●●	63
Reel Fishing III	Natsume	●●●●	72
Reign of Fire	Bam	●●●◖	63
Resident Evil—Code: Veronica X	**Capcom**	●●●●◖	**48**
Resident Evil: Dead Aim	Capcom	●●●◖	70
Resident Evil: Outbreak	**Capcom**	●●●◖	**81**

Maybe it's time to move out of Raccoon City? Well, if you choose to stay, there is a load of unlockables and secrets to make blasting zombies even more of a roaring good time.

- Defeat any three scenarios with one specific character to unlock their character collage. Cost is 500 points.
- Find all special items of one specific character to unlock their voice.

• UNLOCKABLE MODES	HOW TO UNLOCK
Hard mode	Complete all five scenarios on easy or normal mode
Infinity mode	Complete all scenarios and event lists with 100 percent to unlock infinite ammo mode in the shop. You can then purchase it in the shop for 50,000 points
No partner mode	Beat all five scenarios on very hard mode, purchase for 10,000 points
Very hard mode	Complete all five scenarios on hard mode

• UNLOCKABLE BGM	HOW TO UNLOCK
Battle BGM	Complete all five scenarios
Below Freezing Point BGM	Complete the Below Freezing Point scenario
Decisions, Decisions BGM	Complete the Decisions, Decisions scenario
Hellfire BGM	Complete the Hellfire scenario
Outbreak BGM	Complete the Outbreak scenario
The Hive BGM	Complete The Hive scenario

Return to Castle Wolfenstein: OR	Activision	●●●◖	71
Rez	Sega	●●●●◖	53
Ridge Racer V	Namco	●●●●◖	38
Riding Spirits	Bam	●●●◖	61
Ring of Red	Konami	●●●●	43
Rise to Honor	Sony CEA	●●●	78
⚡Risk: Global Domination	Atari	●●●●	73
RLH: Run Like Hell	Interplay	●●●	62
Road Kill	Midway	●●●●	74
Road Trip	Conspiracy	●●●●	61
Robin Hood: Defender of the Crown	Capcom	●●◖	74
Rocky	Ubisoft	●●●●	64
Robot Alchemic Drive	Enix	●●●●	63
Robotech: Battlecry	TDK	●●●◖	62
Rogue Ops	Kemco	●●◖	75
Romance of the Three Kingdoms VII	Koei	●●◖	60
Romance of the Three Kingdoms VIII	Koei	●●●	73
RPG Maker 2	Agetec	●●●◖	74
RTX Red Rock	LucasArts	●●	71
Rugby	EA Sports	●●●◖	48
Rugby 2004	EA Sports	●●●	73
Rumble Racing	EA Games	●●●●◖	45
Rune: Viking Warlord	Take-Two	●●◖	48
Rygar: The Legendary Adventure	Tecmo	●●●●◖	64
Salt Lake 2002	Eidos	●●◖	55
Samurai Jack: The Shadow of Aku	Sega	●●●●	80
Samurai Warriors	**Koei/EA**	●●●●	**81**

The story is almost never-ending in this button-mashing masterpiece, but here are more of your favorite hack-n-slash personalities to unlock.

COMPLETE...	...TO UNLOCK
Kenshin story	Keiji Maeda
Noh, Oichi, Magoichi stories	Nobunaga Oda
Okuni story	Goemon Ishikawa
Keiji story	Okuni
Shingen, Hanzo stories	Kunoichi
Any story	Magoichi Saika
Yukimura story	Shingen Takeda
Any two stories	Masamune Date
Ranmaru story	Noh
Mitsuhide story	Ranmaru Mari

Saturday Night Speedway	Atari	●●◖	81
Savage Skies	Bam	●●●	56
Scooby-Doo! Mystery Mayhem	THQ	●●●	81
Scooby-Doo! Night of 100 Frights	**THQ**	●●●	**58**
The Scorpion King: Rise of the Akkadian	Universal	●●	62
Secret Weapons Over Normandy	LucasArts	●●●●	75
Seek and Destroy	Conspiracy	●●●◖	66
Sega Bass Fishing Duel	Sega	●●●	62
Sega Soccer Slam	Sega Sports	●●	62
Sega Sports Tennis	Sega Sports	●●●●◖	60
⚡Serious Sam: Next Encounter	Global Star	●●●◖	81
Seven Samurai 20XX	Sammy	●●	80
Shadow Hearts	Midway	●●●●	52
Shadow of Destiny	Konami	●●●◖	43
Shadow Man: 2econd Coming	Acclaim	●●	57
Shaun Palmer's Pro Snowboarder	Activision	●●◖	52
Shifters	3DO	●	58
Shinobi	Sega	●●●◖	63
Shox	EA Sports Big	●●●◖	63
Shrek Super Party	TDK Mediactive	●●◖	64
Siren	**Sony CEA**	●●●	**81**

Anyone can be the enemy. Your best friend can turn against you—this village has gone to pot.

TIME ATTACK MODE Get the first ending, then when you select a stage, press the ▢ button.

BRAIN CELL GAME Collect archive item 08—then you will be able to play from the Main menu.

Silent Hill 2	**Konami**	●●●●◖	**50**
Silent Hill 3	Konami	●●●●◖	71
Silent Line: Armored Core	Agetec	●●●◖	70
Silent Scope	Konami	●●●	39
Silent Scope 2	Konami	●●●◖	49
Silent Scope 3	Konami	●●●◖	62
Silpheed: The Lost Planet	Working Designs	●●●◖	40
The Simpsons: Hit & Run	Vivendi Universal	●●●●	72
The Simpsons: Road Rage	**EA Games**	●●●	**52**
The Simpsons Skateboarding	EA Games	●◖	64
The Sims	EA Games	●●●●	65
⚡The Sims: Bustin' Out	EA Games	●●●●◖	76
Sky Gunner	Atlus	●●●◖	58
Sky Odyssey	Activision	●●●	40
Sled Storm	EA Sports Big	●●●◖	55
Sly Cooper and the Thievius Raccoonus	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**62**
Smash Cars	Metro3D	●●●◖	71
Smash Court Tennis Pro Tournament	Namco	●●●◖	56
Smuggler's Run	**Rockstar**	●●●●◖	**39**
Smuggler's Run 2: Hostile Territory	Rockstar	●●●●◖	52
Soccer America: International Cup	Hot-B	●●	48
Soccer Mania	EA/Lego	●●●◖	59
⚡SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**60**
⚡SOCOM II: U.S. Navy SEALs	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**75**
Soldier of Fortune	Majesco	●●●	52
Sonic Heroes	Sega	●●	77
Soul Calibur II	**Namco**	●●●●●	**72**
Soul Reaver 2	Eidos	●●●	52
Space Channel 5 Special Edition	Sega	●●●◖	75
Space Race	Infogrames	●●◖	59
Spawn Armageddon	Namco	●◖	76
Speed Kings	Acclaim	●●●●	70
Sphinx and the Cursed Mummy	THQ	●●●◖	75
Spider-Man	**Activision**	●●●●◖	**57**
Splashdown	Infogrames	●●●●	52
Splashdown: Rides Gone Wild	**THQ**	●●●●●	**72**
Splinter Cell	Ubisoft	●●●●◖	68
SpongeBob SquarePants: Battle for Bikini Bottom	THQ	●●●●◖	75
SpyHunter	**Midway**	●●●●◖	**50**
SpyHunter 2	Midway	●●●	76
Spyro: Enter the Dragonfly	Vivendi Universal	●●●	64
SSX	**EA Sports Big**	●●●●●	**38**
SSX Tricky	**EA Sports Big**	●●●●●	**52**
⚡SSX 3	**EA Sports Big**	●●●●●	**74**

P.S.A.T. SAVE

THE PLAYSTATION APTITUDE TEST.

MATCH THE GAME TITLES WITH THEIR ICONS

1 Devil May Cry
2 Dynasty Warriors 3
3 Fatal Frame: Crimson Butterfly
4 Ico
5 Lowrider
6 Maximo vs. Army of Zin
7 Okage: Shadow King
8 Onimusha 2: Samurai's Destiny
9 R-Type Final
10 Rez
11 RPG Maker 2
12 Shinobi
13 Silent Hill
14 The Simpsons: Hit & Run
15 The Suffering
16 Xenosaga

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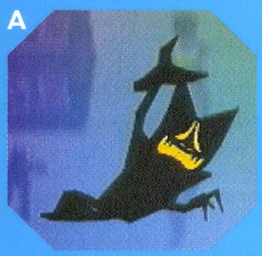
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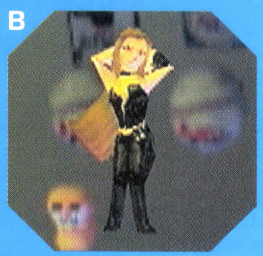
ICONS

LIKE AN S.A.T., ONLY MORE INTERESTING

A



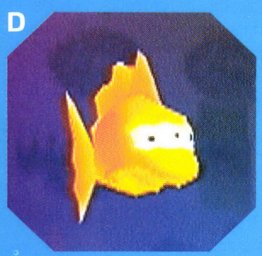
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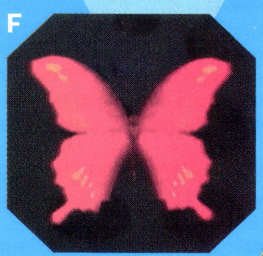
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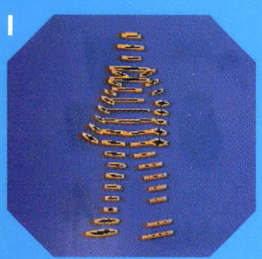
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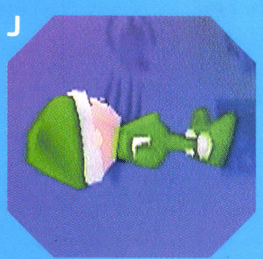
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I



J



K



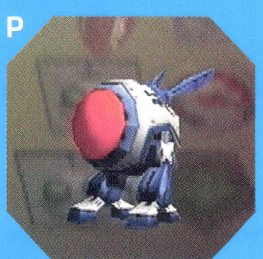
N



O



P





Answers: 1B, 2E, 3F, 4K, 5C, 6H, 7A, 8L, 9P, 10I, 11J, 12O, 13M, 14D, 15G, 16N.



GOOD, BAD, AND UGLY

ROLE PLAYING GAMES

Some days it sucks to be you, which is the perfect time for you to pretend to be someone else. Here are some options to get you away from the day-to-day doldrums—and we also tell you which games actually make your life seem golden.

GOOD

BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE

Interplay

●●●●◐

When you take full-bore *D&D* geekery—20-sided dice, saving throws, and all—and make it transparent to the player, what you have left is a fast-paced action-RPG with an interesting story. The *Gauntlet*-style two-player co-op mode is worth the price of admission in itself.

CHAMPIONS OF NORRATH: REALMS OF EVERQUEST

Sony Online Entertainment

●●●●◐

One of the prettiest and largest RPGs to come to PS2, *Champions* provides innumerable sprawling maps for hours of skeletal and orc carnage. And if that still leaves you wanting, the four-player co-op mode, either online or off, will ably fill any gaps in your schedule.

DARK CLOUD 2

Sony CEA

●●●●●

Dark Cloud 2 may seem like a really kiddy action-RPG at first, but once you start using photography to get ideas on how to modify your weapons and your clownbot in-game, you start realizing just how deep and certifiably awesome it is.

FINAL FANTASY X

Sony CEA

●●●●●

This is pretty much the definitive PS2 RPG. Sure, you could say that about the entire franchise, but it is *FFX* that has the snazziest graphics, the most epic of stories, and voice to boot. Really, it's the perfect all-around RPG package.

FINAL FANTASY XI

Sony CEA

●●●●●

Its online-only, subscription-based format may make *FFXI* seem like a whole different animal, but it's not. Sure, there's plenty of new gameplay for the *Final Fantasy* fan, but there are a whole lot of familiar *Final Fantasy* elements, too.

BAD

ETERNAL RING

Agetec

●●○○○

Let's face it: Two out of five was probably generous for this first-person snoozer from the makers of *King's Field*. But hey, it has an interesting create-your-own-magic-ring mechanic, it's faster than *King's Field*, and it was one of the first PS2 games we got to review. So cut us some slack.

EVERGRACE

Agetec

●●○○○

If playing dress up is your idea of a good time, you're in luck. *Evergrace*'s only saving grace is the unusual system whereby NPCs react differently to you depending on how you're dressed. Too bad the rest of the game is so unbearably bland.

THE LEGEND OF ALON D'AR

Ubisoft

●◐○○○

Sometimes a PC-style RPG works perfectly well on the consoles. This is not one of those times. A needlessly complex and unbalanced battle system is the worst offender here, but there are plenty of other problems to prompt you to stay far away.

UGLY

FOREVER KINGDOM

Agetec

●◐○○○

What could be worse than an RPG whose sole draw is a system that rewards playing dress up? The *sequel* to said RPG, which throws in a poorly constructed three-character party and even more outlandish garments for your modeling pleasure.

KING'S FIELD: THE ANCIENT CITY

Agetec

●●○○○

Its pacing may be soporific, its graphics may be bland and dated, and its story may be all but nonexistent—but if you let it, *The Ancient City* can lure you in like a Venus flytrap, clamping its sticky, smelly jaws around your unsuspecting head.

UNLIMITED SAGA

Square Enix

●●○○○

A grand experiment that became one of the ugliest of failures. The previous games could be written off as "quirky," but not this one. Instead of being slick and innovative, the board-game structure, nonlinear storytelling, and "unique" combat simply didn't work.

GAME	PUBLISHER	SCORE	ISSUE
Star Trek: Shattered Universe	TDK	●●	75
Star Trek Voyager: Elite Force	Majesco	●●◖	53
Star Wars Bounty Hunter	LucasArts	●●●	64
Star Wars: The Clone Wars	LucasArts	●●●	65
Star Wars Super Bombad Racing	LucasArts	●●	45
Star Wars Jedi Starfighter	LucasArts	●●●◖	56
Star Wars Racer Revenge	LucasArts	●●●●◖	55
Star Wars Starfighter	**LucasArts**	●●●●◖	**43**
Starsky & Hutch	Gotham Games	●●	74
State of Emergency	**Rockstar**	●●●	**55**
Stitch: Experiment 626	Sony CEA	●●◖	59
Street Fighter EX 3	Capcom	●●●◖	39
Street Hoops	Activision	●●●◖	60
Stretch Panic	Conspiracy	●●●◖	47
Stuntman	Infogrames/Atari	●●●	59
Sub Rebellion	Metro 3D	●●●●	62
The Suffering	Midway	●●●	80

DIRECTOR COMMENTARY

After completing the game, start a new game and wait for a crow to land next to the three inmates gathered together, then stand on top of the crow.

MONSTER ARCHIVES

When you kill a monster for the first time, its bio will be added to the monster archives.

Suikoden III	Konami	●●●	63
Summer Heat Beach Volleyball	Acclaim	●●●◖	72
Summoner	THQ	●●●	39
Summoner 2	THQ	●●●◖	62
Sunny Garcia Surfing	Ubisoft	●●●◖	51
Super Bust-A-Move	Acclaim	●●●	41
Super Bust-A-Move 2	Ubisoft	●●●◖	63
Super Trucks Racing	XS Games	●◖	76
Supercar Street Challenge	Activision	●●◖	52
Superman: Shadow of Apokolips	Atari	●●●◖	63
Surfing H30	Rockstar	●●	40
SWAT: Global Strike Team	Sierra	●●●	74
Swing Away Golf	EA Games	●●●	38
⚡Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain	Sony CEA	●●●◖	81
Tak and the Power of Juju	THQ	●●●◖	75
Tarzan: Untamed	Ubisoft	●●●◖	52
Taz: Wanted	Infogrames	●●●◖	60
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles	Konami	●●◖	75
Tekken 4	Namco	●●●◖	61
Tekken Tag Tournament	**Namco**	●●●●◖	**39**
Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven	Activision	●●●	67
The Terminator: Dawn of Fate	Atari	●●◖	63
Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines	Atari	●◖	77
Test Drive	**Infogrames**	●●●◖	**58**
Test Drive Off-Road: Wide Open	Infogrames	●●●	48
Tetris Worlds	THQ	●●	57
Theme Park Roller Coaster	EA Games	●●●●	41
The Thing	Universal	●●●	62
Thunderstrike: Operation Phoenix	Eidos	●◖	52
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2001	EA Sports	●●●	44
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2002	EA Sports	●●●●	55
Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2003	EA Sports	●●●●◖	63
⚡Tiger Woods PGA Tour 2004	**EA Sports**	●●●●●	**73**
Time Crisis 2	Namco	●●●●	49
Time Crisis 3	Namco	●●●●◖	74
TimeSplitters	**Eidos**	●●●●●	**39**
TimeSplitters 2	**Eidos**	●●●●●	**63**
Tokyo Xtreme Racer 3	Crave	●●	76
Tokyo Xtreme Racer Zero	Crave	●●◖	45
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	Ubisoft	●●●◖	65
⚡Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm	Ubisoft	●●●◖	78
⚡Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3	Ubisoft	●●●●	80

TEAM RAINBOW IS AT IT AGAIN

Use this cheat to unlock any mission map you want to play, then tighten the screws on your squad and go to bang. Enter this code at the Main menu: L1, R2, L2, R1, ←, →, □, ○

Tomb Raider: The Angel of Darkness	Eidos	●●	72
⚡Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	**Activision**	●●●●●	**51**
⚡Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4	**Activision**	●●●●●	**63**
⚡Tony Hawk's Underground	**Activision**	●●●●●	**76**
Top Angler	Xicat	●●●◖	57
Top Gear Dare Devil	Kemco	●●●◖	41
Top Gun: Combat Zones	Titus	●●●	50
Total Immersion Racing	Empire	●	66
Transformers	Atari	●●●◖	81
Transworld Surf	Infogrames	●●●◖	57
⚡Tribes: Aerial Assault	Sierra	●●●◖	62
Triple Play 2002	EA Sports	●●	55
Triple Play Baseball	EA Sports	●●	45
⚡Trivial Pursuit: Unhinged	Atari	●●	81
True Crime: Streets of L.A.	Activision	●●	76
Tsugunai: Atonement	Atlus	●●●	53
Turok: Evolution	Acclaim	●◖	62
Twisted Metal: Black	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**47**
⚡Twisted Metal: Black Online	Sony CEA	●●●●	61
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger	EA Games	●●●	62
UFC Throwdown	Infogrames	●●●◖	58
Unison	Tecmo	●●●◖	44
Unlimited Saga	Square Enix	●●	70
Unreal Tournament	Infogrames	●●◖	40
V-Rally 3	Infogrames	●●●●◖	64
Vampire Night	Namco	●●◖	52
Vexx	Acclaim	●●	67
Victorious Boxers	Empire	●●●◖	51
Virtua Fighter 4	**Sega**	●●●●●	**55**
Virtua Fighter 4: Evolution	**Sega**	●●●●●	**72**
Virtual on Marz	Sega	●●	76
Wakeboarding Unleashed	Activision	●●●●◖	70
Wallace & Gromit in Project Zoo	Bam	●●●	74
War Jetz	3DO	●●◖	48
War of the Monsters	**Sony CEA**	●●●●●	**64**
⚡Warhammer 40,000: Fire Warrior	THQ	●●◖	74
Warriors of Might & Magic	3DO	●●◖	44
Wave Rally	Eidos	●◖	53
Way of the Samurai	Bam	●●●◖	59
Wheel of Fortune	Atari	●●◖	76
Whiplash	Eidos	●●●◖	76
Whirl Tour	Vivendi Universal	●●	63
Whiteout	Konami	●	65
Wild Arms 3	Sony CEA	●●●◖	62
Wild Wild Racing	Interplay	●●●	39
Winback	Koei	●●●●	43
World Soccer: Winning Eleven 7 Int'l	**Konami**	●●●●●	**78**
Wipeout Fusion	Bam	●●●●◖	57
Wizardry: Tale of the Forsaken Land	Atlus	●●●	53
Woody Woodpecker: Buzz Buzzard Park	DreamCatcher	●●●	57
⚡World Championship Pool 2004	Jaleco	●●●◖	76
World Destruction League: Thunder Tanks	3DO	●●●	42
World of Outlaws: Sprint Cars	Infogrames	●●●●	55
World Series Baseball 2K3	Sega Sports	●●●●	67
World Soccer: Winning Eleven 6 Int'l	**Konami**	●●●●●	**67**
World Soccer: Winning Eleven 7 Int'l	**Konami**	●●●●●	**78**
World Tour Soccer 2002	Sony CEA	●●●●	53
World Tour Soccer 2003	Sony CEA	●●●●	65
⚡World Tour Soccer 2004	Sony CEA	●●●	80
Wrath Unleashed	LucasArts	●◖	78
WRC: World Rally Championship	**Bam**	●●●●●	**57**
Wreckless: The Yakuza Missions	Activision	●●	63
WTA Tour Tennis	Konami	●	57
WWE Crush Hour	THQ	●●◖	68
WWE SmackDown! Here Comes the Pain	THQ	●●●◖	76
WWE SmackDown! Shut Your Mouth	THQ	●●◖	64
WWE SmackDown! Just Bring It	**THQ**	●●●◖	**52**
X Squad	EA Games	●●●◖	38
The X-Files: Resist or Serve	Vivendi Universal	●●◖	81
X-Men: Next Dimension	Activision	●●●●◖	64
X2: Wolverine's Revenge	Activision	●●●	69
Xenosaga: Episode 1—Der Wille Zur Macht	Namco	●●●●	66
XGRA: Extreme-G Racing Association	Acclaim	●●●●◖	74
⚡XIII	Ubisoft	●●●◖	75
Yanya Caballista: City Skater	Koei	●●●◖	49
Yu-Gi-Oh!: The Duelists of the Roses	Konami	●●◖	67
Zapper	Infogrames	●●◖	64
Z.O.E: Zone of the Enders	Konami	●●●●◖	44
Zone of the Enders: The 2nd Runner	Konami	●●●●◖	68

PS1 ARCHIVES

Still wondering where the PS1 archives are? You'll find them chillin' on the website for *Official U.S. Playstation Magazine* over on www.1UP.com.

READER REVIEWS

THE HUNTER AND THE HUNTED





TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF L.A.

What you said: "*True Crime* might be one of the best driving/shooting/fighting games ever made. Using your upgradeable handgun is awesome; it doesn't even waste bullets. The cars that Nick uses are awesome (except the first one). The fighting style is awesome because you can upgrade your moves. The thing that makes the game look bad is mostly the control system. When I first played it, the controls were hard to use; they should be more like *GTA*'s. When you free roam, things get a little bit weird because you can drive through walls, pedestrians go out of bounds, and you get stuck in your car! But this game is still cool even though it has a few flaws. This game should have a sequel because it's a hot seller and a cool game.

Your score: ●●●●○

Kjd82992@aol.com

What we said: "This is a bad game. The fact that it was so ambitious just amplifies that fact. It's like a big-budget Hollywood flick gone horribly wrong."

Our score: ●●○○○



MANHUNT

What you said: "If there was ever a game that should be rated AO, this is it! *Manhunt* is like *Metal Gear Solid* on serious drugs. Don't get me wrong, it's a great game. But retailers should definitely check IDs when selling this.

You play as James Earl Cash, a death-row inmate who was "executed" but revived by The Director and dumped on the mean streets of Carcer City, only to film you for his snuff films.

The control is like any other stealth-action game's—with the addition of wonderfully brutal executions ranging from clubbing your victim over the head with a bat to stabbing him in the eyes with a glass shard. Just when you get tired of lurking in the shadows, the game introduces firearms.

The replayability is not great, but the executions and variety of missions should keep you entertained till the end. There are always the bonus levels to encourage you to replay levels (don't worry, there's a level-select feature).

"*MANHUNT* IS A PRETTY SOLID GAME."

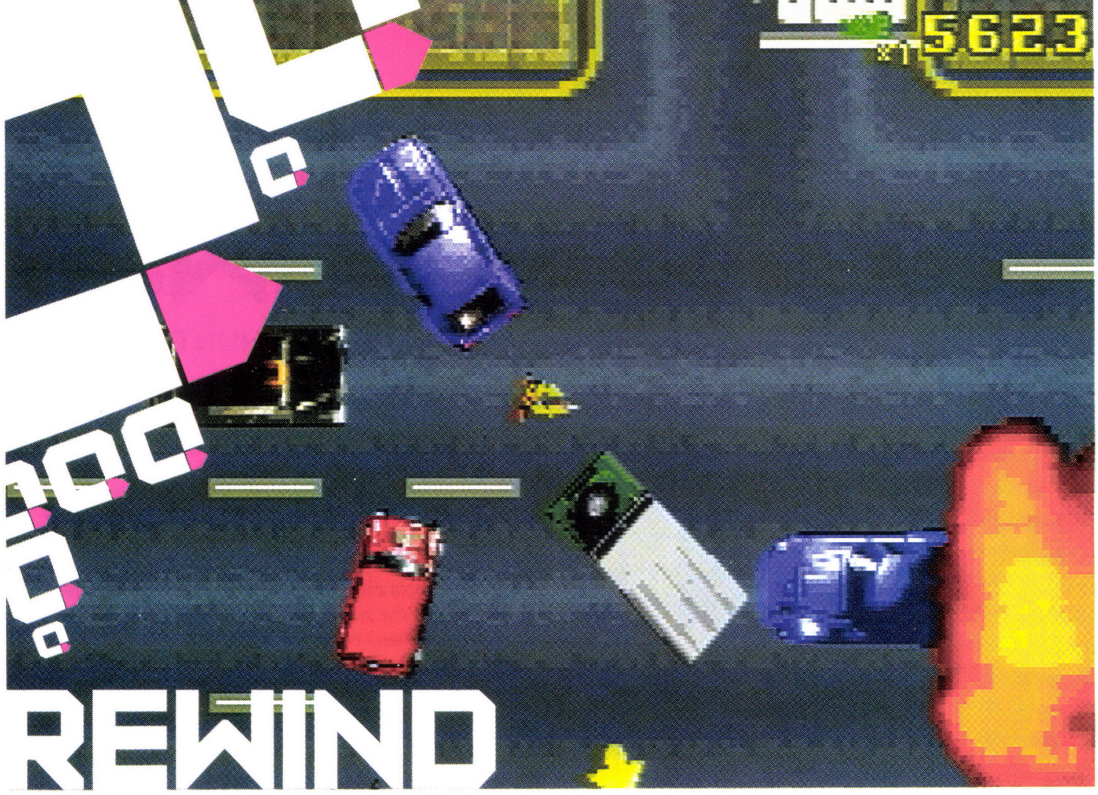
Altogether, *Manhunt* is a pretty solid game. You definitely should not get this if you have a weak stomach or play games in front of your mother. I found myself generally enjoying this game and I think you will, too."

Your score: ●●●●◖

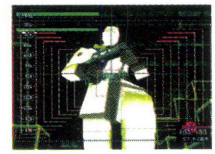
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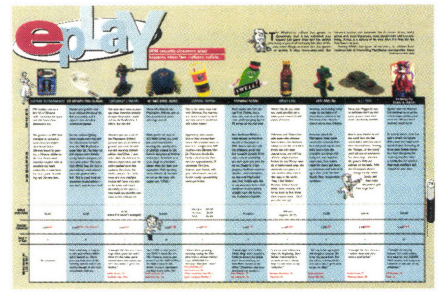
What we said: "A solidly constructed third-person affair that goes from nearly boring to, well, actually pretty good near the end. But the real question is whether you'll want to play it due to its violent subject matter."

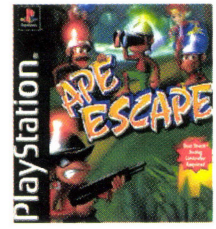
Our score: ●●●◖○









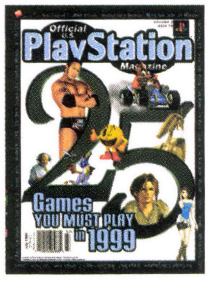


APE IS ENOUGH

Ape Escape was the game of the month in July of 1999, mainly for its incredibly innovative use of the still-new Dual Shock controller.

OH, WHAT A MONTH: JULY OF 1999

Looking five years into the past is always bittersweet. Sometimes it's fun. Sometimes it's funny. Sometimes it's just plain sad. July of 1999 was all of the above.



YES, WE'RE PSYCHIC

This was one of the first times we ran a forward-looking feature about the big games of the coming year, aptly titled "25 Games You Must Play in 1999." In retrospect, we were right about a good 20 of those 25. (Notable misses: *GameDay 2000*, *Blitz 2000*, and *Star Wars: Episode I—The Phantom Menace*. Sorry about that.)

GAME GOODS GARNER GIL

We had finally gotten sick of all the miscellaneous game tchotchkes piled up around the office. So we decided to try a little experiment. We auctioned 15 game-related items of little to no value on eBay and noted how much each sold for. Among the items offered: his and hers Shao Lin belts, an *NFL Blitz* denim jacket, and a *Croc* plush toy. The big winner was a *Mega Man* promotional standee, which went for a whopping $16.25.

PREVIEW HIGHLIGHTS

Well, since we devoted so much space to the hot 25, regular previews were a bit thin on the ground this month. Notable entries included *Mortal Kombat: Special Forces*, *Danger Girl*, and the soon-to-become-vastly underrated *Vandal Hearts II*.

REVIEW HIGHLIGHTS

Though releases were sparse in July of 1999, an unusual number of them were good. Witness the five-disc rating for *Ape Escape*, 4.5 discs each for *Star Ocean: The 2nd Story* and *Lunar: Silver Star Story Complete*, and four discs for *Warzone 2100* and, erm, *Ultimate 8-Ball*.

REVIEW LOWLIGHTS

Centipede and *High Heat Baseball 2000* tied for worst showing with one disc apiece, but perhaps most interesting is the 2.5-disc rating for *Grand Theft Auto: London 1969*. Oh, how things change.

DEMO MADNESS

Playable *Tony Hawk*. Playable *Ape Escape*. Playable *The Next Tetris* (face it, a demo was all you needed). This was a solid month for demos. Even the *MLB 2000* and *Interplay Sports Baseball 2000* demos couldn't harsh our buzz. Plus: *Xena* video. What's not to love?

CHART TOPPERS

Proving that racing fans had had enough of realistic games, *Need for Speed: High Stakes* rocketed to the top of the charts. *Triple Play 2000*, *Syphon Filter*, and *MLB 2000* filled the next three spots—all games we rated highly. And then came No. 5: *Army Men 3D*. We scratched our heads and moved on, not realizing this was to become a cruel, cruel trend. «

CAPTION CONTEST WINNER

"*Thrill Kill*—after the censors." —O.J. Lopez, Naperville, IL.



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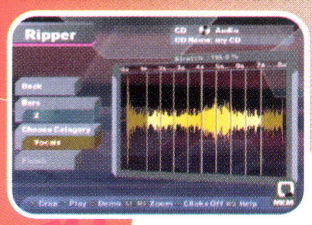
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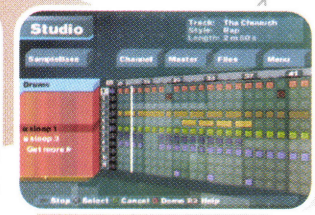
THIS IS THE REMIX

FROM SOFA TO SUPERSTAR... YOU ARE THE REMIX MASTER

Battle game console greats coast-to-coast
and win a trip to MTV Studios in NYC.
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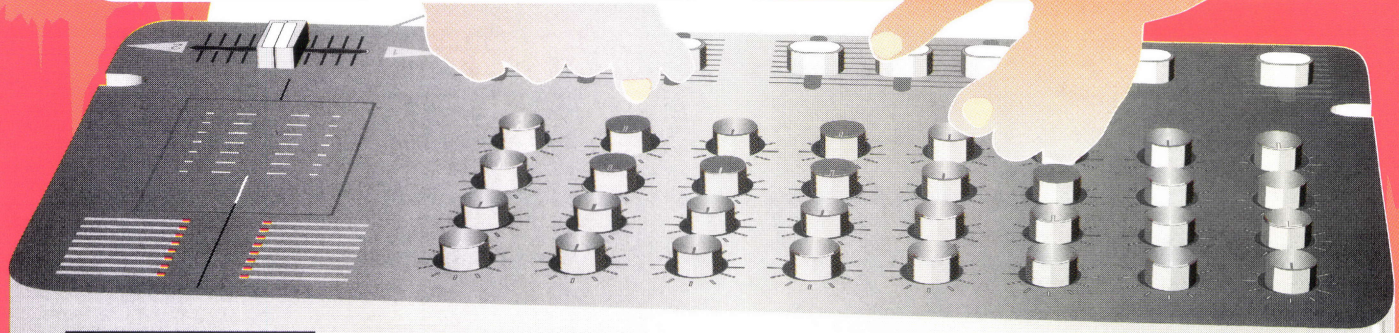
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With MTV Music Generator 3: This is the Remix, you can create your own music like today's hottest producers:

* Remix songs from the biggest names in hip-hop and dance
* Sample music from your favorite CDs
* Make original tracks using thousands of sound samples

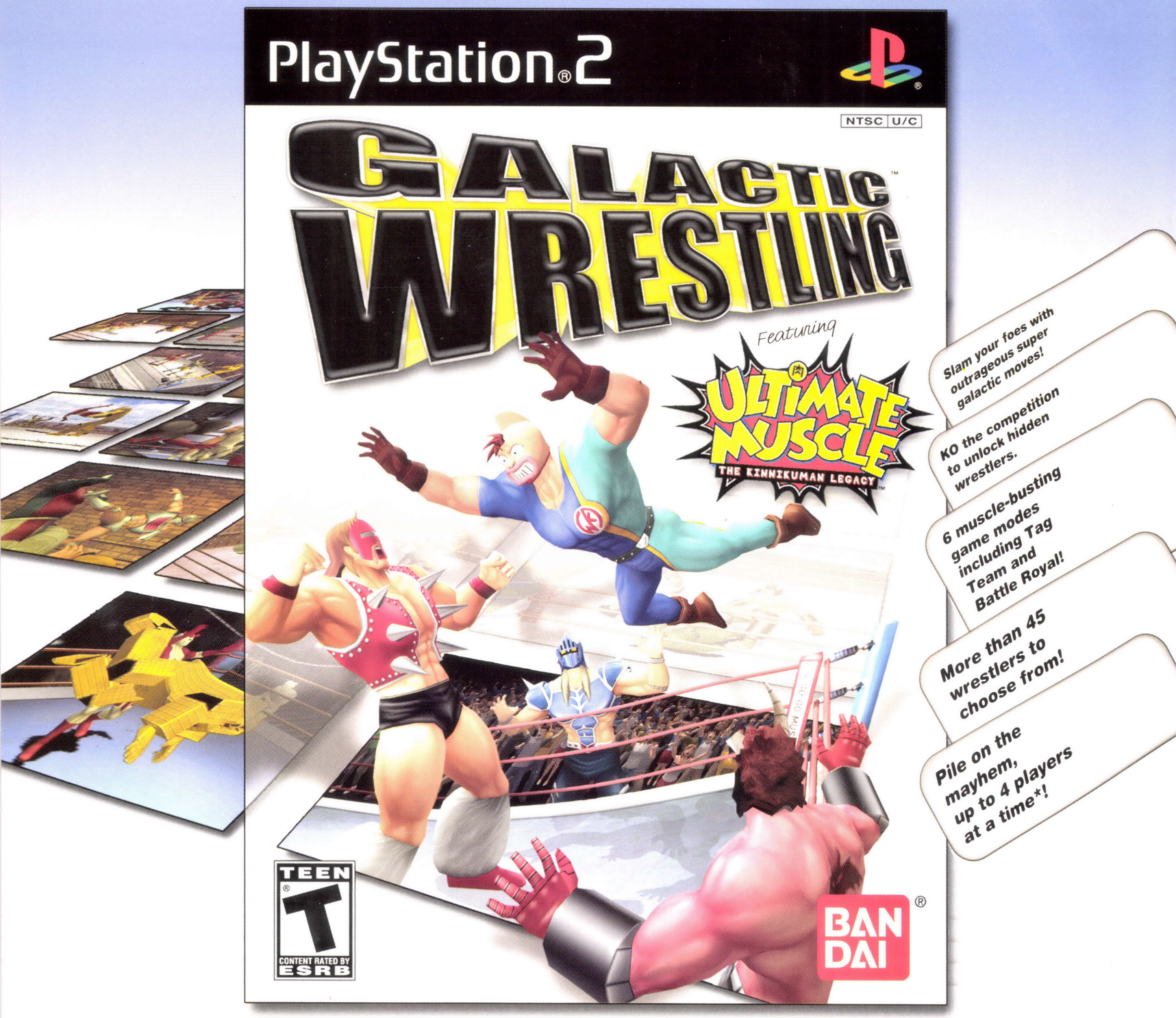


TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB — Mild Lyrics

PlayStation®2 XBOX

Codemasters® GENIUS AT PLAY™

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"...WE HAVEN'T HAD THIS MUCH FUN WITH A BRAND NEW GAME FOR QUITE SOME TIME."

- IGN PS2.com

"...FASTER THAN DEF JAM VENDETTA."

-Gamespy.com

*For multiplayer play, players must use the Multitap (for PlayStation®2)

TEEN T CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

Crude Humor
Violence

www.BandaiGames.com

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